

THE
MORAL AND RELIGIOUS
MISCELLANY;
OR,
SIXTY-ONE
APHORETICAL ESSAYS,
ON SOME OF THE
MOST IMPORTANT
CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES AND VIRTUES.

BY HUGH KNOX, D. D.

IN ST. CROIX.

hæc ego mecum
Compressis agito labris, ubi quid datur otii
Illudo chartis.

HOR.

Quicquid præcipies, esto brevis, ut cito dicta
Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles.

HOR. Ars Poet.

Scribentem juvat ipse favor, minuitque laborem,
Cumque suo crescons pectore fervet opus.

OVID.

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THE PREFACE.

THE following little Essays, were drawn up many years ago, partly as helps to moral and divine conference, in a religious society, and partly as the result of such conferences. They are generally the result of free, and pretty enlarged and comprehensive meditations on the subjects they treat of, and consist of such thoughts as occurred first and most obviously to the open mind, in its free and unfettered discursions on said subjects ;—and they were meant meerly as hints to start the conversation, and to keep it alive, and to the business in hand, that it might not deviate into wild and impertinent digressions.

THIS will account for the Nature and Form of the Essays, which are very singular and uncommon. They consist of a number of loose, general, and often, unconnected Aphorisms, or general Maxims, commonly closed by some practical corollaries or inferences of the greatest moment.

THE primitive design of them, was to convey the most ample, general instruction to the mind on every subject treat-

ed of ; yet so, as that instruction might exhaust the subject in Miniature, as it were, or, in the narrowest compass consistent with perspicuity ;—and that the method of explaining the subjects should be calculated, as much as possible, for affecting the heart by proper motives, and stirring up men to the diligent practice of the virtues and duties explained. And I hope the judicious and intelligent Christian reader will find, upon an attentive perusal of the Essays themselves, that they are not ill adapted to this purpose ; excepting, perhaps, a few, which are more superficial than the rest.

It had been easy to have filled up these Skeletons of Doctrine, and lengthened them out to the ordinary size of pulpit discourses. In this form they would have had, doubtless, many advantages which they are now necessarily deprived of: In this form, they would have admitted of Connexion, Argumentation, Illustration, Persuasion, Pathos and all the Graces and Beauties of fine Composition ; whereas, their present form necessarily precludes these advantages.

P R E F A C E. v

BUT on the other hand, in such a form, they would have been very voluminous and expensive : Few would have purchased them, and perhaps, fewer read them. The present volatile, irreligious taste, nauseates every thing prolix in divinity. Five or six pages of a religious book is as much as we can, in conscience expect, that a modern fine Gentleman or Lady should read at one sitting. The taste of the times is, therefore, purposely consulted in the shortness of these Essays.

A PERSON of this squeamish disposition, may here read, in eight or ten minutes, some of the most important things which can be said on each of these subjects, without breaking off abruptly, in the midst of the sense, and losing the whole chain of connexion.

BESIDES, if the Essays are tolerably executed on this plan, the doctrinal apophorisms contained in them, should be so plain and self-evident, as to supercede the necessity of arguments and illustrations ; the practical corollaries should flow spontaneously and consequentially

from these aphorisms, and the whole should be demonstratively built upon the scriptures referred to in the margin.

AFTER having humbly recommended these imperfect Essays to the public candour and indulgence, and implored the blessing of GOD upon them, for the general good; if I might presume to offer my advice to my fellow-creatures concerning the best way of using them,—it would be as follows: That they would read them, in their private and devout retirements, as Hints for Meditation on these important subjects, laying their minds open, without prejudice, to the influence of divine truth, and earnestly imploring the Father of lights to write these truths and virtues with sunbeams upon their understandings; convey them warm to their hearts, and make them powerfully operative and influential on all the active powers and faculties of their nature.

I HAVE added the Sermons as some compensation to those who may disrelish the dryness of many of the Essays.

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ESSAY I.

CHAP. I.

Of CONVERSION, or REGENERATION.

1. **R**ELIGION being a *character*, must have a *principle*; and this principle must supremely govern and predominate in the life.

We do not call a man *generous* and *friendly*, unless generosity and friendship prevail in him above churlishness and unfriendliness, and are fixed principles in his nature.—So it would be equally absurd to call a man *religious*, only because of the performance of a few outward religious duties, while the main of his temper and character is irreligious and immoral. He only deserves the character of being *religious*, who is such uniformly and predominantly, and in whom morality and religion is a prevailing and discriminating character!

2. TRUE religion, where it is, must govern the man; and nothing can do this but an *inward principle*. Grace, which is this principle, must oppose corruption, and finally prevail over it.

3. THE word of God, and indeed the nature and reason of things, place religion primarily and radically in the *heart*, and represent it as flowing thence into the life and conversation. The heart, as it is the source and fountain of all external corruption, so it must be of all true religion. The tree must first be made good

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before its fruit can be good. A bitter or polluted fountain, cannot send forth pure or sweet water. Men gather not grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles. Good principles are necessarily prerequisite to *morally* or *formally* good actions. Accordingly, the whole stress is laid, in scripture, upon *heart-religion*; or that which is seated and radicated in the heart, and proceeds from pure and right principles and motives there*.

4. As it has been the general opinion of mankind, as well as the voice of scripture, that men are born into this world in a *depraved, corrupt* and *irreligious* state, with strong propensities to vice, and a disinclination to that which appears to be virtuous and good, by the very law of their nature, written on their conscience, and manifested to them by their moral instinctive feelings; so it has been generally thought the peculiar work of the Deity, the God and *Father* of men, to help them, by his grace and Spirit, to rise out of this state of depravity and corruption, and to return to his obedience, favor and enjoyment, in the steep and narrow path of virtue and piety. This has ever been thought a care and work worthy of God the Father of spirits, towards his human offspring; and even a heathen could say, *Nullus vir magnus unquam fuit, sine Divino afflatu*.

5. REVELATION represents this change wrought in sinners by GOD, under the terms *conversion* †; *repentance* †; *regeneration* §; being *born of GOD* ||; *created in Christ Jesus* **; having a *new heart* ††; a *divine na-*

* Prov. xxiii. 26. Ezek. xxxvi. 26.—xviii. 31. Joel ii. 12, 13. Psal. li. and cxxxix. 1 Sam. xvi. 7. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Deut. xiii. 3.

† Matth. xviii. 3. Acts iii. 19. Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

‡ Isa. lv. 7. Luke xiii. 5.

§ Titus iii. 5.

|| John i. 13. 1 John v. 18.

** Eph. ii. 10. 2 Cor. v. 17.

†† Ezek. xxxvi. 25—28. Psal. li.

ture* ; putting off the old man, and putting on the new, and the like †.

6. OUR Lord strongly expresses both the *nature* and *necessity* of this change in sinners, by telling them, *That unless they are born again of water, and of the Spirit, and are converted, they not only shall not, but even cannot, enter into the kingdom of heaven ‡.*

7. GRANTING these expressions of a *new birth by the Spirit*, and a becoming *new creatures*, and the like, to be *figurative* and *metaphorical* ; yet if these metaphors have any *significancy* and *propriety* at all, they must imply the following truths ; namely, (1.) That the change of a sinner by conversion or regeneration, must be *exceeding great*, bearing some analogy to the difference between the circumstances of a child before and after its birth ;—or between a being in a state of non-entity, and after the commencement of its existence, in some essential respects at least.—(2.) That it is not a *partial*, but an *universal* change ; a change of the whole bent of the heart and drift and direction of the affections.—(3.) That it is not a *meer outward, imperfect* change, but one that is *inward, essential and complete*.—(4.) That it is a change not produced by the sinner's own natural powers and endeavours, but *wholly supernatural*, the product of a *divine agency*, effected and produced by the Spirit of God ; And (5.) That it is a change absolutely necessary in every son and daughter of Adam, in order to their entering into the kingdom of heaven.

8. EITHER these inferences are plainly and clearly deducible from these metaphors ; or, otherwise, the metaphors must not only be supposed highly *improper*, but even *pernicious* ; tending to mislead the judgments of men, and obscuring a doctrine of great importance to men's salvation, otherwise plain and obvious in it.

* 2 Pet. i. 4.

† Eph. iv. 22, 25.

‡ John iii. 3, 5. Matth. xviii. 3. Luke xiii. 3.

self, which would be a high imputation on the wisdom and goodness of God, and an unanswerable objection against the revelation of *Christ*.

9. SELF-LOVE, a *desire of reputation and fame*, and a principle of *terror and slavish fear*, often produce a kind of religious character, which is merely outward and greatly imperfect.

10. ALTHOUGH that seed of grace, which is the principle of the spiritual life, is infused *at once* into the whole nature, in the act of regeneration, and gives it a holy taste, bent, turn, tendency and direction; yet the fruits of it shew themselves but *gradually and successively*, in the progressive work of sanctification, as occasions, trials and opportunities elicit and draw them forth into act and view.

11. If regeneration, agreeable to the import of the metaphor, be an *instantaneous* act or operation of the holy Spirit upon the soul, producing a radical, essential change in its temper, giving it a new principle of spiritual life, a general divine bent and tendency:—And if sanctification and mortification are only effects of this new and divine principle of life, carrying on a continual conflict and warfare against the corruptions of nature, and a gradually strengthening and confirming the habits of virtue and holiness;—then may we very easily and rationally account for an *imperfect Christian* going directly to heaven, at death without the necessity of any *intermediate purgatorial* sufferings to fit him for that world of perfect purity. The soul, from the moment of its regeneration, was holy, and was defiled only in consequence of its union with a corrupt bodily nature, with which it was carrying on a continual warfare. In the moment of death, it was released from this corrupt bodily nature, and sprung, immaculate, to its kindred spirits, and its native heaven. The grave is a furnace which will *melt down, purify* and *refine* this corrupt body, whence it will be raised

a glorious, spiritual body, and a fit companion for the glorified spirit.



ESSAY I.

CHAP. II.

The Subject continued. *The corrupt, guilty, lost and helpless State of Man before Conversion.*

1. **T**HE scripture evidence of the wretched state of man *by nature*, is very extensive. Among a vast multitude of scriptures, the following may be consulted; Psal. li. 5. Eph. ii. 1, 3. Job xiv. 4. Psal. xiv. 1—3. Jer. xvii. 9. Isa. lxiv. 6. Rom. vii. 14, to the end.

2. CHRIST is said to have come as a physician to the *sick*, and to seek that which was *lost*. The prodigal is represented as *dead* and *lost*, and his conversion is termed a *coming to himself*, a *being found*, and a *coming again to life*. Conversion is termed a *new birth*, a *new creation*; and sinners, before conversion, are said to be *dead in trespasses and sins*. The unconverted man is said, *not to receive the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them*. Conversion is represented as a work of great power; such as God exerted in Christ when he raised him up from the dead.

3. FROM all these scripture representations we may infer the exceeding *helplessness* of sinners, in an unconverted state. A dead person hath no power to rise. We cannot come to Christ unless the Father draw us. We cannot think a good thought. All our sufficiency is of God, who must work in us both to will and to do; and without Christ we can do nothing. We cannot be

converted without the Spirit: But the Spirit is the Father's free gift in Christ. He must open our eyes before we can *see*, and create us anew in Christ Jesus before we can *spiritually live* and *act*. Faith is the first grace acted by a converted Christian; and yet this faith we cannot act of ourselves, *it is the gift of God*. We are naturally corrupt and disinclined to good before our conversion, and *here* lies our helplessness, until God by his quickening Spirit gives life to our souls, and enables us to will and to do, and creates us anew in Christ Jesus to good works.

4. FROM *reason, observation* and *experience* we have the following evidences of this truth: (1.) We know good and evil by our natural conscience; yet we find in ourselves a strong disinclination to the good which we approve, and a prevailing inclination to the evil which we disapprove.—(2.) We know that we are very unlike God, and that we do not cordially love and chuse him and his laws: But God could not form creatures with such a temper: This therefore proves, that we are now degenerated from our first state, and become corrupt creatures.—(3.) If children come into the world such as we may suppose that God first created man, *i. e. holy*, and with a *propensity to good*, or even in a state of indifference to good and evil; some would surely be virtuous from the womb upwards; some would surely follow the good principle of their nature, especially as *praise* and *happiness* lie on that side; but universal observation and experience prove the contrary, as well as the word of God*.—(4.) If men were not born corrupt and impotent, a virtuous and religious education would bring all who are blessed with it over to the side of virtue, in spite of evil example: But do we not plainly see that children are backward to imitate good examples, and prone to follow bad ones? They greedily suck in evil advice and the knowledge

* Psal. liii. 1,—3. Rom. iii. 10, &c.

of wicked things; but it requires much labour to bring them to learn good; they also quickly forget it, and we plainly see that their heart is still corrupt and strongly inclined to vice, in spite of all the antidotes we can instil into their minds against it.—(5.) If we attentively examine our own hearts, lives and experiences but for *one day*, we shall have an overpowering conviction of our dreadful corruption. How readily do we forget God? How averse are our minds to the contemplation of him and his perfections? How little do we think of the love of Christ? We read or hear with unconcern, the amazing story of his love, and feel little or no gratitude for it. Our memories, our thoughts, our meditations, the general bent and tenour of our affections and passions, even our religious duties, and our very best works, may convince us of the wretchedness of our state by nature.

5. WE see that a virtuous and Christian education cannot, of itself, recover our natures, or remove their corruption.—We see that the study of philosophy and the knowledge of the scriptures, cannot accomplish this.—We see that the most powerful preaching, and best adapted means of grace, cannot effect this great change.—We see men making many vows and resolutions, and labouring hard in the way of outward means, to rise from their corruptions, and yet all prove ineffectual.—We have often, in an unconverted state, been convinced of our guiltiness and danger; we have often resolved to do better, and we have bound *our resolutions* with *solemn vows*:—We have even set a time to begin a better life; but before that time came, our resolutions have proved as the morning cloud. And even when we have attempted to mend our life and conduct, have we not found ourselves so exceeding feeble, as to be unable to effect any thing to purpose? Have we not felt, as it were, a dead weight pulling us backwards, and sinking us down into the bed of sloth, carnal security and inaction? Deplorable but pregnant

proofs, and convincing demonstrations, both of our *corruption* and *impotency* by nature !



E S S A Y. I.

C H A P. III.

The same Subject continued. *Corruption and helplessness, cannot justify Sloth in the unconverted Sinner.*

i. **T**HOUGH God hath reserved in his own hands the great work of Conversion, as his *own proper work*, and we cannot therefore convert ourselves; yet we ought not to say that we can do nothing. God hath given to unconverted sinners a great deal of important work to do, and put it in their power to do it;—hath obliged them by commands, persuaded them by exhortations, awed them by threatenings, engaged them by motives, encouraged them by promises, and given them reason to expect that he will meet with them and convert them in the performance of this work. He hath also laid their help on one who is mighty to save.

2. **A**LTHO unconverted sinners are *spiritually dead*, yet they are not *naturally so*. They have an understanding, a will and a memory : They may know something of their guilt and danger : They may understand something of Christ and his saving design : They may read and hear, think and meditate on God's word; frequent his house, and attend his ordinances. But if sinners will not do these things, they will not do what they *may*, and *are able* to do, and therefore are *inexcusable*.

3. **A** DISPENSATION of God's Spirit attends his gospel, and he hath promised to give his Spirit to them

that ask him; to *all* that ask him, without limitation or reserve. He hath even made it the duty of sinners to ask this Spirit, and to attend diligently on divine ordinances, which are the walks of the Spirit. Now, if sinners know that they cannot be converted without this Spirit, and that they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, unless they are converted; and if, notwithstanding they know this, they do not diligently ask it of God, nor attend on those instrumental duties and means of grace, in the use of which this Spirit is dispensed, then they are wholly to blame for continuing unconverted.

4. God is following sinners with the common influences and operations of his Spirit; striving with them, and seeking admittance into their hearts. Now, if sinners would obey and cherish this common operation, and ask the special and converting influences of the Spirit, he has obliged himself by promise to give it them*: But if, on the contrary, they resist and grieve this holy Spirit, which would have sealed them to the day of redemption, they themselves are wholly to blame for continuing unconverted.

5. If the case were even otherwise, and there were but a *bare probability*, or even a *possibility*, that the humble and earnest endeavours of a sinner might meet with acceptance, and be crowned with success, he is wholly inexcuseable and condemnable in neglecting these endeavours.

* Luke xi. 9,—13. Rev. iii. 20.—xxii. 17.

E S S A Y I.

C H A P. IV.

The same Subject continued. *The Duty of unconverted Persons.*

1. **SUCH** ought often and seriously to consider, That it is impossible they should ever go to heaven in their present state. The scriptures expressly preclude them*; and in the very reason and nature of things, they are wholly disqualified both for the *employments* and *enjoyments* of the heavenly state.

2. **THEY** should labour to obtain a deep sense of the danger and misery of an unconverted state: of the evil and guilt of sin, and of the torments to which it will unavoidably expose the unconverted sinner, who dies in his iniquities.

3. **THEY** should frequently consider the shortness and uncertainty of the *present life*, which is their *only working day*, their *only period of trial* and preparation for eternity, and that death will shortly put an end to all their *hope, help* and *endeavours*; and therefore, as they value salvation, they should not delay conversion.

4. **THEY** should labour for a deep, convictive sense of their own inability to convert themselves, and that they must perish for ever unless God help them, and that speedily.

5. **THEY** should endeavour after a thorough and firm persuasion, that there is *hope* and *help* for them in God, and that they *may*, and assuredly *will*, obtain the grace of conversion, if they take the right method, and labour diligently in seeking it. They should set it before them in firm purpose and resolution, as a settled

* Match. xviii. 3. Luke xiii. 5. John iii. 3, 5. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

and determined point, that by the help of God, they *will* be converted, and that they will never give over seeking the blessing, in all the appointed means of grace, until they find it; saying with *Jacob*, "I will not let thee go, until thou blest me."

6. THEY should *actually* and *resolutely* set about denying all manner of known sin, and every tempting companion and amusement, and attempt the performance of every known duty, as well as they are able, without delay; uncertain how quickly death may cut them off in their sins, and frustrate all purposes of future amendment.

7. ALL this should be attempted *in the strength of* God, through Christ, assuredly depending *on*, and confiding *in* his help in the way of duty, and perpetually keeping up a deep sense of their own impotence; that all their sufficiency is of God, and that, of themselves, they can do nothing; but all things, Christ strengthening them.

8. THEY should *instantly* and *forthwith* make choice of God for their portion and blessedness, and attempt to enter into solemn covenant with him through Christ. They should bring themselves back to him as returning prodigals; give *themselves, their interest*, and all their *powers and abilities* up to him, as his long-abused property, and submit to him in all things.

9. THEY should attempt *daily* and *perpetually* to accept of Christ, by faith, in all his saving offices, giving up their polluted, diseased souls into his hands as their compassionate Physician and Redeemer, assuredly believing, that he will in no wise cast them out or reject them, and firmly trusting both his power and his grace.

10. IF, in the course of these endeavours, the unrenewed heart rises up against these duties, and the *world* and the *devil* tempt the sinner to slight them as *needless*, or to neglect them as *impossible*, or *too severe*, (which will doubtless be often the case) it would be the wisest

course for the person thus tempted, to flee instantly to God, by prayer, for succour, and to get the temptation removed. One earnest look unto God, upon such occasions, has been found by experience, to bring more strength into the soul, and to be more efficacious against temptation, than all the human reasoning and resolutions in the world. However, it is the duty of the sinner to oppose the temptation *by all means, and with all his might*; and it would be wise, beforehand, to be always expecting such trials, and to be pre-engaging the almighty aid against the hour of temptation.

11. As the unconverted should never neglect *secret prayer*, nor *any one ordinance* which they can attend; so, when the *Spirit of God* moves upon their souls, either in convincing them of sin and misery, or in exciting holy thoughts and good resolutions, they should cherish these motions, and pray God, at the time, to increase and set home these convictions, till they issue in an effectual and saving conversion! For, if they resist, and quench, and grieve the holy Spirit, he will leave them, and they are in danger of being undone for ever.

12. To help them in these duties, they should often set a part seasons for more solemn meditation, self-examination and prayer.



ESSAY I.

CHAP. V.

The same Subject continued. *Symptoms of an unconverted State.*

I. **W**HATEVER characters the scriptures represent as under an impossibility of entering into the kingdom of heaven, are certainly to be reck-

oned among the unconverted. Such are *all unbelievers* and *impenitent sinners*;—all habitual fornicators, adulterers, unclean, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, idolaters, envious, malicious persons, strife-makers, sowers of sedition, and the like*. Yet it should be observed,

2. THAT in order to pronounce men unconverted, we must suppose them under the dominion of these sins, and to be living customarily and habitually in the practice of them: Which will appear from their committing them *freely*, and with *delight*; *frequently*; *pleading for them*; *palliating* and *extenuating* them, and hating to be admonished and reproved on account of them.

3. MEN who continue wilfully ignorant of their christian duty, and careless about it (which may be known by their undervaluing, despising and neglecting the means of knowledge and of grace) are certainly in an unconverted state. All church-neglecters come under this predicament.

4. MEN who are careless of their *hearts* and *thoughts*, and give themselves little trouble about their *bidden sins* and *heart-plagues*, notwithstanding they may be pretty careful and conscientious in the outward part of moral and religious duties, are certainly unconverted: For, where there is true grace, it turns the eye inward to the heart, and the true convert is most watchful against hidden corruptions.

5. THOSE who neglect the duties of *secret prayer*, *meditation* and *self-examination*, although they may be scrupulously punctual in attending the public ordinances of religion, are certainly unconverted: For, secret duties, more especially *secret prayer*, is the *first*, the *continued*, and the *last* duty of the converted soul.

6. WANT of *relish* for *holy actions*, and *religious duties*; a *distaste* to them; a desire that they were not necessary,

* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Gal. v. 19—21. Eph. v. 5, &c. Rev. xxi. 8. Mark xvi. 16.

and a being pleased with any excuse to get rid of them, are very sure signs of an unconverted state; more especially, when this dislike for holiness is accompanied with an inordinate desire of, and hankering after worldly enjoyments and sensual pleasures.

7. MEN, who upon impartial examination, find that they are no better than they were many years ago, but rather more vicious and depraved, have all the reason in the world to pass an unfavourable judgment on their state: For grace is of a growing nature, and where it is, carries forward the soul progressively to higher attainments in virtue and holiness.

8. MEN who have freely indulged vice in their youth, and can remember no time since when they were greatly humbled before God for their youthful lusts; greatly exercised about deliverance from their guilt and dominion, and made to abandon them with indignation; and who are not very sensible of some remarkable change for the better, both in their hearts and lives, may certainly conclude that they are yet in *the gall of bitterness*.

9. A MAN who is not *rationally assured*, and who does not sometimes *feel*, that he loves God above all things, and that he is ready to part with all things, his most valued interests, his most beloved lusts, and even life itself, in obedience to his will, and rather than give up his title to him:—He who loves any creature more than God—earth more than heaven—his body more than his soul;—who had rather be rich than good, and prefers the pleasures of this world before God's favor and enjoyment, is certainly unconverted.

10. THAT man, who upon the most deliberate consideration, is not willing to deny himself the most beloved gratifications; to take up his cross and follow his Redeemer through poverty, contempt, persecution and even martyrdom itself; who does not cordially accept and embrace him in all his characters, submit to him in all his offices, trust him

without reserve, and give up all things to him and for him, is certainly still in an unregenerate, unconverted state.



E S S A Y I.

C H A P. VI.

The same Subject continued. *The unhappy State of the Unconverted.*

1. **SUCH** are spiritually dead; dead in trespasses and sins; dead to God, and to every good purpose.

2. **SUCH** are *slaves*; *slaves to satan*, who rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience, blinds their eyes that they cannot discern the truth, and leads them captive at his pleasure;—*slaves* also to their unruly appetites and tyrannizing lusts †.

3. **SUCH** are children of wrath, and, if conversion prevent it not, born heirs to that torment, which is the certain effects of this wrath ‡: They are stiled in scripture *the children of the devil*, bearing his image, possessing his spirit and temper; and consequently heirs of that hell, which was prepared for the *devil* and his angels, which is their proper inheritance §.

4. **THE** unconverted are enemies to God by wicked works; full of natural antipathy and enmity against his being, nature, will and laws. The principle which prevails in their hearts, would naturally lead them to

• Eph. ii. 1. 1 Tim. v. 6.

† 2 Tim. ii. 26. Tit. iii. 3. Rom. vi. 17.

‡ Eph. ii. 3.

§ John viii. 41, 42, 44. Matth. xxv. 41.

dethrone and destroy the blessed God, if they had the power.—And being such, God is a consuming fire to them: His nature and all his laws are against them, and so are also all his perfections, except his mercy, which indeed waits a while to be gracious; but, being abused and slighted, will in the end aggravate their guilt and misery.

5. SUCH continue under the guilt of all the sins they ever have committed. Every law and threatening in the Bible is against them: They are condemned already; sentence is already passed against them in numberless places; so that nothing but the slender and precarious thread of present life suspends the execution.

6. THEY are on the very brink of perdition, momentarily in danger of dropping into a place and state of endless misery. Every night they lie down, there is even something more than a possibility, that before the morning's light, they may lift up their eyes, being in torments.

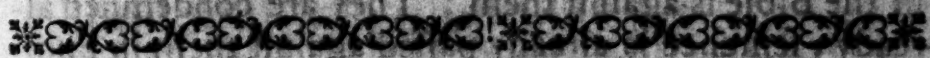
7. THEY have no covenant right or title to any mercy they enjoy. Every blessing they enjoy has the nature of a *curse* to them, in the manner in which they receive and use it. This earth is only their prison, where they are for a short time, supported by God, till the time of their execution comes. *The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction; they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.*

8. If they were perfectly known, their case would be pitied, and their nature hated, by every good person on earth. And the angels and other holy spirits, so far as they know them, do thus regard them.

9. If such did thoroughly know their own wretched and perilous condition, they could not possibly enjoy one moment's peace, tranquility or happiness in this life. And, indeed, whatever of this kind they do en-

joy, is only a fatal delusory happiness, founded on *false hopes*; producing a *destructive security*, and issuing in *endless despair*.

10. THERE is only left for them this comfort, that they are yet out of a place of torment, and that there is still hope and help for them in God, through Christ, if they will speedily embrace the opportunity. The *present moment* is all they can rationally rely upon, in which to better their state, and cast the die for eternity!



E S S A Y I.

C H A P. VII.

The same Subject continued. *Mistakes about Conversion rectified.*

1. IT has been already observed, that conversion is a *thorough and remarkable change*; and therefore, that those persons must be deceived, who imagine themselves to have been truly converted, merely because of some *outward, partial, and incomplete* change which they may have undergone, either from difference in age and circumstances in life; alterations in their health, constitution, or interests and connexions; the principles of self-love, honour and reputation; legal pannics and terrors, or from false and incomplete views of religion. It may now be observed *negatively*,

(1.) THAT *christian baptism* cannot be that conversion or regeneration, to which the promise of heaven is annexed: For we are expressly told, that unless a man is born again of the *Spirit*, as well as of *water*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Besides, many baptized persons, are amongst the wickedest of men and have evident and absolute need of spiritual regeneration.

(2.) THE *bare profession*, even of a *true religion*, however specious, is not conversion: Else all the professors of a true religion would be *true converts*; which we know is far from being the case in fact. Much less,

(3.) CAN it consist in a man's changing his religious profession: For this may be, and often is done from *worldly, interested, lucrative motives*, and *false, erroneous principles*, and not from convictions of truth and duty.

(4.) STRONG convictions of sin, and great fear of God's wrath, cannot, of themselves, prove a sinner to be truly converted. If so, we must conclude, that *Cain, Herod, Pilate, Simon Magus* and *Judas Iscariot*, were true converts, which is not true in fact; because the terrors of these unhappy men did not issue in true repentance.

(5.) AN *external sober, moral conduct*, a life free from the gross outward acts of sin, and a regular attendance on the ordinances of religion, are no certain evidences of conversion, though they may justly command the respect and esteem of our fellow-men. This was the righteousness of the *Pharisees*: It is also the righteousness of most hypocrites and formalists: And yet our Saviour, who knew and detected the real characters of these men, has assured us, that unless *our righteousness shall exceed theirs*, we shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God*.

(6.) A MAN'S really renouncing and abandoning some sin or sins, to which he has been addicted, cannot prove him a true convert, while he continues in the love and practice of other sins. *Herod* heard *John Baptist* gladly, and did many things in obedience to his ministry, which were not much against his natural inclination; but would by no means part with his beloved lust, his darling *Herodias*†. Men do many things of this kind from meer prudential motives, and because these sins are destructive of their health, in-

* Matth. v. 20.

† Mark vi. 20, 23.

terest and reputation: But he who offends *willfully, allowedly and perseveringly* in one point, is guilty of the whole law*; and plainly shews that he despises the authority by which it is enjoined, and obedience to it enforced.

(7.) A MAN's shewing remarkable zeal in religion, is no certain proof that he is a true convert, or a real Christian. Zeal is either *good* or *bad*, according to the *objects* about which it is employed, the *motives* from which it originates, and the *spirit* and *temper* with which it is exercised. If zeal be *according to knowledge*, it can hardly exceed in the measure of it; for it is always good to be zealously affected in a good thing†. But a *blind, ignorant and misguided* zeal, is the most furious, mischievous and destructive of all the passions. The apostles knew not what manner of spirit they were of, when in a paroxysm of their frantic zeal, they called for fire from heaven to destroy the *Samaritans*‡. As touching zeal, *St. Paul*, when *Saul*, persecuted the church of Christ, and destroyed that which he should have built up§.

2. It has been already said, *positively*, and I here repeat it, That conversion is a *great, universal, radical* change of the soul, by the regenerating influences of the Spirit of God,—not of the *substance* and *nature* of the soul; but of its *temper* and *principles*;—not such as to preclude all sin and corruption in this life, but such as causes piety and virtue to predominate in the character, and as it lays a foundation for *progress in holiness*, and *final perfection*. It is, in short, a *new and divine nature* and *principle*, generating a *new and divine life*.

3. THE *forerunners* and *concomitant attendants* of this change, are generally, as follows: (1.) This change is preceded by such a conviction of guilt and pollution, as deeply humbles the soul before God, and makes it

* James ii. 10. † Gal. iv. 18. ‡ Luke ix. 39.

§ Read Acts ix. Gal. i. 13. &c. Phil. iii. 5, 6.

feel itself exposed to eternal misery; that it is *helpless* and *lying at undeserved mercy*, and that it *must perish*, if it receives not *this mercy*.—(2.) By such a sense of the evil of sin, as causes the soul to abhor it, and to wish above all things to be freed from its dominion and pollution.—(3.) By such a sense of the depravity and badness of the sinner's heart, as makes him see the necessity of its being changed by divine grace, and makes him wish, above all things to be truly regenerated.—(4.) By such a sense of the sinner's inability to change his own heart and affections, as makes him feel that it never can be done, unless God is pleased to take the work wholly into his own hands.—(5.) By such a sense of the sinner's *need of Christ*, as makes him see his help in him alone, so as earnestly to desire to embrace him; to be united to him, and found in him:—And finally, by such a sight and sense of the power and grace of Christ, his all-sufficiency to save unto the uttermost, and his fullness and suitableness to all the sinner's wants and desires, as engages the sinner, as a *lost, sin-sick, perishing* creature, to cast himself cheerfully into the hands of this glorious, compassionate Redeemer, with a full and unshaken confidence, that he will work the great salvation *in him* and *for him*, and give him a complete victory over every enemy.

E S S A Y I.

C H A P. VIII.

The same subject continued. *The Way of discerning true Conversion by its effects and consequences.*

AS soon as the Spirit of God regenerates the soul, it is conscious of a *kind* and *degree* of *light* and *knowledge* which it had not before, and is possessed

with *correspondent affections*. It knows *itself* in a different manner from what it formerly did. Unconverted men do little study and little know their *inward man*. Their thoughts and observations are chiefly employed about *outward circumstances* and *external accomplishments*: But the light of grace opens a new scene to the soul, the eye of which is turned *inward, backward and forward*; and as light increases, it still sees more and more of its natural *deformity, vileness and guiltiness*, and more and more admires that *wonderful mercy*, which regarded it in its low condition, and undertook its redemption and deliverance.

2. THE converted soul knows and sees God in quite a different manner from what was usual. A *new and glorious light* shines now on all his *perfections, providences, laws and works*. In its unrenewed state, it had indeed a speculative knowledge of God, which struck it at times, with wonder and admiration: But now God appears incomparably glorious and amiable; a fit object of the soul's love and choice, and its desirable portion. Formerly, it could observe his wondrous works and adorable providences, without considering God in them: But now the whole world seems full of God; God appears more or less to the soul in every work, in every providence, in every mercy, and in every affliction: and the soul sees and approves his *glory and beauty, his power and wisdom, his justice and goodness* in all; is charmed with these manifestations of him, and follows hard after him as its *only and all-sufficient portion*.

3. THE converted soul has quite a new kind of knowledge and apprehension of *Christ* to what it formerly had. Unconverted persons, at the very best, only consider Christ as a *great and worthy person*, and a *benefactor* to a guilty world; as sustaining a most *heroical and benevolent* character, and therefore worthy the admiration and praise of men: But the true convert sees Christ, by faith, as the *chief among ten thousand*,

and altogether lovely. There is a kind of secret, unaccountable charm in the very *name*, and *idea* of *Jesus*, that excites his love and draws his affections; whom having not seen, he loves, and in whom, although now he sees him not, yet believing, he exults and rejoices, with a joy unspeakable and full of glory.* He sees an inexpressible beauty in his *person* and *character*, and a wonderful excellency, fitness and necessity in all his *saving offices*; and, in this view, Christ is exceeding dear and precious to him. He regards him as his *Lord*, his *love*, his *life*, his *friend*, his *wisdom*, *righteousness*, *sanctification* and *redemption*. When you speak of Christ to him, his heart leaps with gratitude and joy, and he is ready to cry out, ‘This is my beloved, and this is my friend, ‘O ye daughters of *Jerusalem*;—he who hath loved ‘me and washed me from my sins in his own blood;— ‘he in whom I have believed, and to whom I have ‘committed my soul, against that day;—my Saviour ‘my Lord, my Judge, and my portion!’

4. THE real convert has quite a new knowledge and judgment of God’s *holy law*, and quite new regards and affections respecting it. The *Psalmist*’s prayer is now answered in him, “Lord open thou mine eyes, “that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law †.” He, indeed, beholds God’s law with *new eyes*, and regards it with *new affections*. As the very best among unconverted persons have very *false*, *contracted*, *unworthy* notions of the divine law; so neither are they cordial friends to the strictness of its requirements, and that holiness which it enjoins. “The carnal mind is “enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law “of God, neither indeed can be: For the law is *spi-* “*ritual*, and can be only relished and delighted in by “a *renewed*, *spiritual* mind; but *such* are *carnal*, *sold*

* Pet. i. 8.

† Psal. cxix. 18.

“ *under sin**.” Some of the divine laws, indeed, which do not cross their beloved lusts, may, in some measure, gain their liking and approbation, and they may be ashamed to speak evil of the law in general, which the reason of mankind and the scriptures of truth, pronounce to be *holy, just and good*†: But still their corrupt hearts and natures reluctant against the *purity* and *perfection* of the divine law; and the more they know of its purity, exceeding broadness, and the unabating, unremitting strictness of its requirements, still the more do their hearts rise up against it. Now, converting grace reconciles both the *judgment* and *affections* to the purity of the divine law, both by opening the sinner’s eyes to behold the beauty of holiness, and by conforming and attempering his heart to that purity and spirituality which the law requires. “He delights in the law of God, after the inward man;” he consents that it is *holy, just and good*; and when his corruptions would lead him to violate its precepts, he wholly condemns himself, and approves that law, which, thro’ the momentary prevalence of corruption, he transgresses‡. But that I may be brief,

5. THE renewed soul has quite a new knowledge and judgment of *sin*, and his heart stands quite differently affected towards it.

6. THE instrumental duties of religion; *divine ordinances* and *religious duties*, are regarded in a quite other manner than usual by the renewed sinner, and performed and frequented on quite different principles, and for quite different ends and purposes; namely, to promote the glory of God, and obtain spiritual communion with him in the use of these means.

7. THE *passions* and leading *affections* of the renewed soul, have quite a *new tendency, bent and direction*. His

* Rom. vii. 14. — viii. 7.

† Rom. vii. 12.

‡ Rom. vii. throughout.

joys are quite new; as to their objects; and so are his *desires* and *aversions*, his *cares* and *fears*, his *hopes* and *sorrows*.

8. In a word, a man, after conversion, may be said to be a *new creature*; he has new *principles*, new *ends*, new *purposes* and *pursuits*, new *friends* and *enemies*, new *interests*, new *pains* and *pleasures*, and consequently a *new nature*; according to that very plain and emphatical declaration of the Apostle, *Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a NEW CREATURE: OLD things are PASSED AWAY; behold, ALL THINGS are become NEW**.

9. If these things, therefore, be so; if such is the *universal* and *remarkable* change wrought in the sinner by regeneration, Is it possible that such a change can have long passed upon men, and yet they be totally ignorant of the matter?

10. It may indeed happen, that a few are savingly changed in *infancy* and *childhood*, and under the influence of an early Christian education, before vicious habits have been formed and confirmed in the soul. In others also, the change (as to the sensible effects of it) may have been *slow*, *gradual*, and almost *imperceptible*; and so, neither the *work* itself, nor the *time* when it was performed, may be discerned or acknowledged, in a course of many years. It may also happen, in some cases, that all the symptoms of a *saving* and *effectual* conversion may be felt, and yet those who feel them, may long doubt of their *truth* and *reality*, and suspect that they are *fallacious* and *counterfeit*; until the Spirit himself shines upon his own work, and compels (as it were) a convictive evidence of its truth; "The Spirit witnessing with *their spirits*†:" However, it is next to impossible, but that all must know, that a *great work* has been wrought upon them, and a *mighty change* has passed in them; and that "whereas they were once blind, now they see†."

* 2 Cor. v. 17.

† Rom. viii. 16.

† John ix. 25.

11. IT may be laid down as a general maxim, to which experience and observation have furnished very few exceptions, That the *greater sinners* men have been, the *deeper* and more *humiliating* have been their convictions of sin, and the *more sensible* and *remarkable* this great change in them, both to themselves and others.

12. WHAT must we rationally and probably infer concerning persons of this character, who have never yet experienced any such remarkable change in themselves?—Either, that they are total strangers to *self-examination* and *self-knowledge* (which is a sure mark of a graceless state;)—or that *no such change* has ever as yet passed upon them!

13. WHAT then must we necessarily conclude, concerning the state of the generality of nominal Christians?—That they are not converted; nor born again of the Spirit; and consequently, that, in their present condition, they *cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven**!

* John iii. 5.



ESSAY I.

CHAP. IX.

The same subject continued. *The Motives to Conversion.*

1. **T**HE conversion of a sinner gives joy in heaven. It gives pleasure to the heart of GOD, and of his *dear Son*; and *every benevolent spirit* of that upper world, partakes in the joy, that a co-heir is born to glory*.

E

* Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Matth. xxiii. 37. Luke xix. 41, 42—xv. 7, 10, 32.

2. As far as it is known, it rejoiceth the heart of every good person upon earth. The whole church militant rejoice in it.

3. To bring sinners to *repentance* and *final happiness*, is the chief design of all the manifestations of God to men, and of all his great and memorable transactions on earth.

4. To effect this was the grand design of Christ's *incarnation, ministry, miracles, labours, sufferings*, ascension to glory, and pouring down the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, on his apostles and on the church.

5. To accomplish the conversion of human sinners, the apostles of the Lamb *laboured*, and *wrote*, and *travelled*, and *suffered*, and *died*; and this is the grand business of all the labour and expence of a gospel ministry in the world.

6. God's merciful nature invites, allures, and encourages sinners to repentance and conversion. He hath no pleasure in the final misery of sinners, but that they should turn from their way and live.—*This he solemnly swears* by his sacred life†. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance‡. He is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and of great compassion, pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin§. See this merciful disposition of God to repenting sinners, illustrated with an inexpressible beauty and energy, in the conduct of the *father* towards the *returning prodigal*, Luke xv.

7. God's most gracious *calls*, and exceeding many great and precious *promises*, should have an irresistible force to induce us to conversion; especially when considered in conjunction with those riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering patience, which sinners are despising and abusing, to the unspeakable aggravation of their own guilt and misery||.

† Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

‡ 2 Pet. iii. 9.

§ Exod. xxxiv. 6.

|| Rom. ii. 4, 5.

8. THE gates of heaven are set open, and all the riches of its beauty and glory displayed before sinners, for this very purpose, that they might be allured by the prospect of celestial glory, to conversion and repentance.

9. WE are apt to think the descriptions given in scripture of hell and everlasting misery and torment, very disgusting; but the sole design of *these representations* is to alarm the fears of sinners by the prospect of this misery, that so they may be brought to a speedy and effectual conversion, *Hell* would never have been revealed to sinners, had it not been, that knowing these terrors of the Lord, they might be persuaded to repentance.

10. THE *safe and happy state* which conversion puts us into, and the *rich and glorious privileges* which it confers upon us, even in this life, should be a powerful motive to our getting into this happy state: Pardon, peace and reconciliation with an offended God; deliverance from the indwelling power, curse and condemnation of sin, adoption, protection; an interest in God as our portion, and the comfortable hope of his eternal enjoyment.

11. GOD's having brought down the terms of his great salvation so low, and made it such a possible, feasible and practicable thing for sinners to be saved, will render them wholly inexcusable, if they continue unconverted, and so come short of salvation. They are commanded and invited, by a solecism in language, to buy the great salvation without money or price, to come and drink of the water of life freely*; only to look unto Christ, from the ends of the earth, and be saved; to come unto him, to receive him, and to believe in him†.

12. ALTHOUGH we cannot fulfil these reasonable and easy conditions of the new and gracious covenant, by

*-Isa. lv. 1, 2. Rev. xxii. 17.

†-Isa. xlv. 22. John i. 12. Matth. ii. 28.

any strength of our own, yet God hath promised, that he will put his spirit into us, and help us, and work in us both to will and to do the things that are pleasing to him, if we *sincerely* and *importunately* solicit this divine agent by prayer*.

13. But the most *cogent* and *necessitating* motive of all is, That we either must *be converted* or must *perish eternally*! The scripture is *clear, decisive* and *peremptory* in this matter: so that we are under this *dilemma*; 'We must either *turn or burn*; either *be converted to God*, and born again of the Spirit, or take up our residence 'forever with devils and damned spirits!'

* Luke ii. 9—14.



E S S A Y II.

C H A P. I.

JUSTIFICATION: *Or the method of a Sinner's being justified before God.*

1. **J**USTIFICATION no where in scripture signifies a sinner's being *made righteous*; but it every where signifies his being *esteemed, manifested, or pronounced* righteous.

2. THIS word, although it has always this signification, yet it has *three* different senses in the scriptures; either, *first*, it is taken for our *present* justification *in the sight of God*, our being *pardoned*, and accepted into a state of favor and friendship with him:—Or, *secondly*, for our justification *before men*, and *our own consciences*:—Or, *thirdly*, for our *public sentence of acquittance and approbation*, on the day of judgment, in the presence of the assembled world*.

* Psal. xxxii. 1, 2. Rom. iii. 22. &c.—iv. 2. &c. Gal. ii. 16. —iii. 1, &c. Jam. ii. 20—26. 1 John iii. 21. Job. xxvii. 6. Matth. xxv. 34.

3. JUSTIFICATION is a forensic or law-term, opposed to *condemnation*. Now condemnation never signifies the *making of men guilty*, but only *pronouncing them so*; in like manner, justification never signifies making men holy, but only declaring them to be such in the eye of the law.

4. WE are said to be justified by the imputation of Christ's righteousness: Now, to *impute*, is to esteem any character or quality to belong to a person as his.

5. A THING may be imputed to a person, which was always his own: So *sin* is imputed to a sinner, when he is treated as an offender; in like manner, *righteousness* is justly imputed to a person, who has always obeyed the law.

6. A THING, *quality or character* may also be imputed to a person, which was not *always or originally* his own, but is only esteemed to belong to him, in the eye of the law: Thus, a debt is imputed to the *surety*, and his payment of it is imputed to the *debtor*, and reckoned *his act and deed*.

7. THIS seems to be the proper notion of *imputation* in the present doctrine. Christ as our surety, has undertaken to *pay our debts*, i. e. *to atone for our sins*. Our sins are, therefore imputed to him, and accordingly he suffers for them, as though they had been his own: And his righteousness is freely and graciously imputed to us, if we are indeed believers, so that we may plead it before God as *our justifying righteousness*: And *therefore* it is that God justifies and acquits us as righteous, even for the sake of his dear Son's righteousness, which we accept and plead by faith.

8. As *sinners* we may be said to owe a *double or twofold debt* to God, which must be paid before we can be justified. We owe him *perfect obedience* to the law, through the whole of our lives; and *this* would indeed justify us, if we were innocent creatures, and did perfectly fulfil this condition of the first covenant:

But being now *sinners*, we owe the debt of *eternal punishment*, and the debt of *perfect obedience* also, (our obligations to which, as the creatures and subjects of God, can never be cancelled :) Now, we are equally unable to pay *either* of these debts. As the punishment which we owe is *eternal*, we must be *ever* paying it, and never shall have paid off the score. No moment shall arrive in the course of eternal duration, when we shall be able to say, *This debt is paid*. And as to the *other debt* of *perfect obedience*, the payment of it becomes impossible to those who have *once sinned*; seeing that obedience can never be *perfect*, in which there is *one failure or defect*.

9. SINNERS being therefore *thus incapable* and *insolvent*, Christ *undertook for them* as their *surety*;—*first*, by *suffering*, to pay the debt of punishment due for their sins; and *secondly*, by his *perfect* and *sinless obedience* to the law of God, from his birth to his death, he hath wrought out for them a complete righteousness, answering every demand of the law; and thus he is become THE LORD THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS*.

10. THE righteousness which is imputed to believers for their justification, is not the *personal* righteousness of Christ, as *man*; nor his *essential* righteousness, as God; but his *suretiship* righteousness, as *God-man Mediator*; and is the whole of his *obedience* and *sufferings*, from his birth to his death, which he performed in the room and stead of believers.

11. THIS imputation, therefore, is God's graciously making over of this perfect suretiship righteousness of Christ to believers, and his accepting their persons, on that account, as righteous.

* Jer. xxiii. 6.—xxxiii. 16.

E S S A Y II.

C H A P. II.

The Doctrine of Justification, through the imputed Righteousness of Christ, continued.

1. **I**N the doctrine of Justification, by the righteousness of Christ, we are not to apprehend God as mistaking our real characters, and esteeming us perfectly righteous, when indeed we are not : On the contrary, he considers us as being just what we are, *poor, sinful men*, who have fulfilled the demands of his law, only by the obedience of our surety.

2. **NOR** ought we to esteem ourselves the *more righteous* or *worthy*, on account of our being thus justified, but as unworthy and hell-deserving as ever : Consequently, this doctrine is so far from ministring to spiritual pride, that, when rightly understood, it must tend greatly to humble the justified believer ; seeing those who are *thus justified*, are still *ungodly**.

3. **THE** righteousness of Christ is imputed to none but *true believers* ; *i. e.* such as have truly received Christ, and are united to him by faith : For, in thus receiving him, we receive his *person, offices and benefits*, and consequently, *his righteousness*, which is one of those benefits, *freely* offered in the gospel to all who will accept it.

4. **THIS** righteousness is not imputed to a sinner before he has faith, nor is the imputation of it delayed till the fruits of faith appear ; but the moment a sinner believes, it is imputed to him, and he is justified†.

5. **BUT** that this doctrine may appear in a still more *clear, convictive and unexceptionable* point of light :

* Rom. iv. 5.

† Rom. iv. 24, 25.

(1.) It is evident, that man is naturally and necessarily under law to GOD ; and this is equally true of all created beings. (2.) Some kind of righteousness is absolutely necessary to man's justification. (3.) That righteousness which justifies man, must be such as answers to the perfection of that law under which man is. (4.) The law was at first given to man for *two distinct ends* ; *first*, To signify GOD's will, enjoined by his authority for the rule of man's duty ; and, *secondly*, As a covenant between GOD and man, according to which, man was to expect life or death eternal, as he *should* or *should not* fulfil the terms of it. Now, this law, in the *last* sense of it, is abrogated by the bringing in of a *better covenant* ; but in the *first* sense, the law, as a *rule of duty, obliging to obedience*, is of perpetual obligation. In *this sense*, Christ came to *establish the law*, and has incorporated it into his gospel, in its utmost purity, as the *law of his kingdom*, and the *rule of his subjects*. It is therefore a righteousness answerable to the demands of *this law*, which alone can justify us. But,

(5.) WE can have no such righteousness of our own ; nor can any creature provide such a righteousness for us ; And it is expressly declared by the Apostle, "That by the deeds of the law, no flesh living shall be justified*."

(6.) THE law, an obedience to which the Apostle excludes from having any share in our justification, is not merely the *ceremonial law*, as some have imagined, but the *moral law* also :—That law, by which is the *knowledge of sin*† :—That law which was *ordained to life*‡ :—That law, by the breach of which the whole world was condemned, and from the curse of which Christ came to deliver us|| :—That law against which the Gentiles sinned § ;—and that law which we *establish by faith*** ;

* Rom. viii. 3. — iii. 20, 28. Gal. ii. 16. — iii. 21.

† Rom. iii. 20. — vii. 7.

‡ Rom. vii. 10. — x. 5.

|| Rom. iii. 19. Gal. iii. 13.

§ Rom. iii. 9.

** Rom. iii. 31.

all which descriptions, are applicable *only* to the *moral law*. *Abraham* is declared to have been justified by *faith alone*, without works done in obedience to *any law**; and the Apostle expressly excludes *works of every kind* from our justification†.

(7.) No such *NEW LAW of gospel sincerity* (taking in *faith, repentance and sincere*, though *imperfect*, obedience, as the ground of our justification under the *new covenant*, instead of perfect obedience under *the old*) has ever been given by GOD as the term of our pardon and acceptance: For, if we were justified before GOD by such a *patchwork, imperfect* righteousness as this, two absurdities would follow:—*First*, GOD must be supposed to abate in the demands of his law, in favor of our corruptions; and, if GOD could abate *any thing* of the perfection of his law, he might abate *more*; yea, he might cancel its obligations altogether. In that case, Christ lived and died in vain, who lived and died to *establish and honor* the law; and mankind might have been redeemed and saved without his *atonement and mediation*:—*Secondly*, We are then still under a *covenant of works*, and live by *doing*: For, let the work be *perfect or imperfect*, it will still be a *covenant of works*, so long as *works* are the *condition of it*!—Both of which are expressly contrary to the doctrine of the gospel.

8. We cannot possibly be justified by the *works, or merit, or righteousness* of any *mere creature*, however holy or dignified; none being able to pay more than that righteousness which he himself owes, as a creature, to the law of GOD: For creatures are obliged to employ all their powers, talents and faculties in the service of their Creator; and when they have done all that they are commanded, and all that they can, they have done only their duty; and therefore can, properly speaking, merit nothing for other creatures‡.

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* Rom. iv. 2, 3.

‡ Luke xvii. 9, 10.

† Eph. ii. 8, 9. Rom. ii. 6.

E S S A Y II.

C H A P. III.

The Doctrine of Justification continued.

1. **W**E have already observed, that we have no righteousness of our own whereby we can be justified, so that if ever we are justified, it must be by the righteousness of *another*; and *this other*, as the scriptures declare, is the *Lord Jesus Christ*, who appeared upon earth to fulfil all righteousness; tho' he owed no such righteousness on his own account, as Mediator (this being an office which he voluntarily undertook, and to which he was by no means antecedently obliged): For this purpose also, he was *made of a woman, made under the law; appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh; gave his life a ransom for many, and made his soul an offering for sin*.*

As it appears to me a matter of unspeakable importance that mankind should well understand this doctrine, so I take the liberty of entreating the readers of this little Essay, to bestow a close attention to the aphorisms advanced in it, and to the scriptures in the margin, upon which these aphorisms are grounded.

2. CHRIST is expressly called the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, and we are said to be justified by HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS†.

3. THIS mediatorial or suretiship righteousness of Christ, is expressly said to be *made over, or imputed* to believing sinners for their justification‡.

4. CHRIST wrought out this righteousness for us, by

* Gal. iv. 4. Phil. ii. 7, 8. Matth. xx. 28. Heb. ix. 28. Isa. liii.

† Jer. xxiii. 6. Isa. xlv. 24. — liii. 11. Dan. ix. 24.

‡ Rom. iii. 24. — v. 18, 21. — viii. 1, 4. — x. 4.

the appointment of God, in consequence of the covenant of redemption*.

5. THIS righteousness was wrought out in the *same nature* which *sinned* and *fell*, and which *stood in need of it*: He assumed not the *nature*, nor undertook the *cause* of *fallen angels*, but of the *fallen* and *lost seed of Adam*, the progenitor of human sinners. So that HE, by assuming *our nature* is become *our kinsman*, to redeem *our lost inheritance* †; and, it is remarkable, that God *prepared him a body* for this very purpose; which proves that the design was originally from God, and that he is well-pleased for his righteousness sake ‡.

6. NOTHING can be clearer and plainer from the whole current of scripture, than that what Christ *did* and *suffered in our nature*, as *God-man Mediator*, he *did* and *suffered properly in our room and stead*, and that both his *obedience* and *sufferings* were properly *vicarious*, i. e. *for us*, and transferable *to us*, upon our being enabled to comply with, and fulfil the conditions of the covenant of grace; i. e. *believe* in such a manner as to *repent* and *return* unto God, by a saving conversion§; and *this alone* can account for the greatness of our Lord's *dejection*, *consternation*, *terror* and *agony* in the last scenes of his passion.

7. God the Father hath declared his acceptance of this righteousness for all the purposes for which it was intended, and in consequence of which, he is declared to be a *just God*, while a *Saviour*, and the *justifier of sinners* who believe in Jesus||. He is represented as de-

* Zech. vi. 12, 13. 1 Pet. i. 19, 20. Prov. viii. 22,—31. Heb. x. 5,—10. Isa. xlii. 6.—xlix. 3,—9.—l. 5,—10.—liii. 10. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. i. 2. Gal. i. 4.

† Ruth. iv. 4,—15. Levit. xxv. 24.

‡ Gal. iv. 4. Heb. ii. 14. Psal. xl. 6. Rom. viii. 3.—v. 19.

§ Read and attentively consider Heb. ix. 26,—28. 1 Pet. ii. 24. John. i. 29. Eph. v. 2. Matth. xx. 28—xxvi. 28. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Gal. iii. 13. Rom. iii. 25. 2 Cor. v. 21.

|| Rom. iii. 26.

lighting in Christ, in the very prospect of his *thus offering himself*, and *working out a righteousness* for men; and as being actually *delighted* and *well-pleased* with that sacrifice which, in the fulness of time, he offered†. GOD's *acceptance* and *approbation* of this righteousness, is also proved by his raising him from the prison of the grave, and receiving him into heaven‡.

8. THE way in which we become interested in this righteousness, is by *faith*, which will be the subject of the following Essay.

9. As this mediatorial righteousness of Christ is *perfect* and *complete*, so if it be imputed to a sinner for his justification, it must be every way sufficient for that purpose. It is to the *full satisfaction* of all the parties concerned: For, *first*, as Christ was perfectly holy in his nature, of infinite dignity in his person, and *did* and *suffered* all that the law required, so the demands of the law are fully satisfied, and the law itself *more* honoured than it could have been by the perfect obedience of innocent men or angels:—*Secondly*, GOD himself is *perfectly satisfied*, as the whole design was *from him*, and all his perfections do most illustriously shine out in this way of justifying a sinner§:—It is a method pleasing to Christ: He *freely* offered himself; he *gloriously revived* from under his sufferings, and is *highly exalted* and *rewarded* in consequence of them||:—Nor, surely, can the *pardoned sinner* himself have any thing to object against this method of his justification. He had no righteousness of his own, nor could the whole universe of created beings furnish him with any which could be available: In this *forlorn* and *destitute condition*, GOD pitied him and

• Prov. viii. Isa. xlii. 1. Matth. iii. 17.

† Eph. v. 2.

‡ Acts ii. 24. Rom. iv. 25. — viii. 34. Heb. xiii. 20. John xvi. 10.

§ Job xxxiii. 23, 24. 1 John iv. 10. Acts ii. 23.

|| Phillip. ii. 6, — 11.

laid his help upon one mighty to save; and Christ wrought out a most perfect righteousness for his justification.

10. As it is undoubtedly true, that we cannot be justified by any *inherent, personal righteousness* of our own; so it is equally certain, that without *such an inherent righteousness*, wrought in us by the regenerating, sanctifying Spirit, we can never enter into the kingdom of heaven. This is a doctrine of vast importance also, and which is evident from the whole current of scripture*. *Holiness* is that *preparatory qualification*, which is necessary in order to our possessing the inheritance of God's saints in glory,—in the same manner as *faith* is necessary in order to obtain an interest in the righteousness of Christ, for the sinner's justification. *Faith* puts us in a state of favour with God: *Holiness* qualifies us for his enjoyment. Without *faith* we cannot be *justified*: Without *holiness* we cannot be *glorified*.

* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Heb. xii. 14, &c. &c.

E S S A Y III.

The NATURE of FAITH in general, and of JUSTIFYING FAITH in particular.

1. **F**AITH is properly an assent of the understanding to the truth of some testimony: It ought always to rest on *sufficient evidence*, and is either *human* or *divine*, according to the testimony which it respects.

2. **HUMAN** faith is an assent to the testimony of *men*, and admits of various degrees, from absolute disbelief, to a firm persuasion.

3. THE firmest foundation of human faith, is, when a number of men, of good character and competent judges of the matter which they testify, perfectly agree in their testimony;---when they lay down their lives in confirmation of it, without any view of interest in propagating a falsehood;---and when numbers, who are declared enemies to their testimony, yet confess the principal matters of it. On this foundation stands our belief of the truth of Christianity, so far as it is a *matter of fact*, which recommends itself to our understandings by *external evidence*.

4. DIVINE faith rests on the testimony of that GOD, who can neither *be deceived himself* nor *deceive us*; and therefore must be *infallibly true*. Wherefore, whenever we come to be assured that God hath *revealed* or *declared* any thing or doctrine, we are as certain of its truth, as that God liveth; however *mysterious* or *incomprehensible* the doctrine or matter revealed may appear to our *limited, finite understandings*.

5. HUMAN testimony is, in its own nature, *fallible*, because it is the testimony of a creature, *whose perfections are limited*, and who may possibly be *mistaken, deceived, lie* or *repent*: Yet human testimony may, in some cases, be so circumstanced, as to give the *highest degree* of *moral certainty*.

6. SAVING faith begins by receiving, and submitting to the *whole testimony* of GOD, recorded in scripture, as *true, divine* and *infallible*.

7. If it be true, that we ought to *have reason* to believe what we do believe; or, that we ought to believe *only upon sufficient evidence*, it will follow, that every believer of Christianity should endeavour to be well acquainted with the evidences of the truth of Christianity, both *external* and *internal*.

8. THIS *general faith* of the *truth* and *divinity* of the holy scriptures, includes in it a *particular faith* of every

particular truth, doctrine, promise, law or threatening, contained in these scriptures. Consequently,

9. WHEN we have once paid the *obedience of faith* to the whole word of GOD, and known by the contents of this revelation, *our own guilty, miserable, helpless and perishing state by sin*, and the glorious remedy provided in a Mediator and Redeemer;—his glorious dignity, power, grace, offices and suitableness to our wants and necessities, we then *believe on him as the Son of GOD, and our Redeemer*. This is *justifying, saving faith*; the faith required by Christ and his apostles.

10. DIVINES have distinguished faith, as it *assents to truth, or receives and applies a promise*: The former they call an *act of the understanding*; the latter, an *act of the will*: The former they call *assent*; the latter *consent*. But faith in the simple notion of it, seems to be only ‘an act of the understanding, firmly assenting to saving truth.’ Yet,

11. THE necessity of the *consent of the will*;—the act of *trust or reliance*, as it is called, or the *application of the promise*, is, by no means denied: But this I would rather consider as the *fruit of faith*, than as *faith itself*.

12. DIVINES have distinguished and explained *historical faith—temporary faith—faith of miracles—faith of devils*, and the like; but as neither of these is the *true gospel faith*, to which the promises are annexed, the consideration of them is here omitted.

13. TRUE and *saving faith* begins in the belief of GOD, his *providence* and his *word*, and terminates and fixes on *Christ and his righteousness*, as the *great, saving object* therein exhibited.

14. FAITH, in the principle of it, is the *gift of GOD to us*, and a *grace wrought in us* by his holy Spirit*.

15. FAITH does not *justify and save us* as it is an *act of ours* (for so, it is a *work* and has no merit for this

* Eph. ii. 8. Col. ii. 12. 2 Thes. i. 11.

purpose;) but only as it *credits* the testimony of God concerning his Son Jesus Christ, so as to *receive* him in all his offices, according to the gospel offer of him;—to *unite the soul to him*—and to *embrace, rely upon and plead* his righteousness, which justifies.

16. FAITH, disposing the soul to embrace Christ and his righteousness, this righteousness is graciously imputed by God to the believer for his *justification*, and the Spirit, through Christ, is communicated to the believer for his sanctification;—so that Christ dwells in his heart *by, or through* faith; and Christ is made of God to the believer, both *his righteousness* and his *strength*.

17. THAT faith which is the *gift of God*, ever *purifies the heart, works by love*, and is the fruitful principle of *holy obedience*.

18. THE just *live by faith*. Their whole life is a *life of faith on the Son of God*, in which they daily *lean and rely on him*, and derive strength from him*.

* John v. 1,—16.



E S S A Y IV.

C H A P. I.

Of entering into COVENANT with God.

I. A COVENANT is a *stipulation or agreement* between *two or more* parties, wherein certain terms and conditions are to be fulfilled, and certain benefits received upon their performance. But if any of the parties fail to perform their stipulations they become *covenant-breakers*; the other party is absolved from its obligation, and the covenant becomes *void*.

2. IN all covenants between men, there is a *parity* or some kind of *equality* between the parties contracting; and by reason of that natural liberty, which is the inviolable, unalienable privilege of every human creature, with regard to his fellow-men, the *contract*, *stipulation*, or *agreement* must be supposed to be *free* and with *full consent*, and the terms and conditions of the covenant, such as both parties shall mutually consent to. So that the most dignified or powerful mortal, can have no right to force any conditions upon his fellow-men, or bind them to any duties which they do not freely and voluntarily consent to; only upon this proviso, that they have by some crime, *forfeited their natural liberty*.

3. IT is the most astonishing act of condescension, that ever GOD vouchsafed, to enter into covenant with man, as *his creature*, and much more, as his *sinful, obnoxious creature*. As his *creature* and *natural subject*, it was sufficient that GOD gave to man *a law*, with *a penalty*: As a *sinful creature*, and *rebellious subject*, man had no right to expect any thing else but punishment, without any covenant privileges or mercies.

4. GOD, when he created man a moral agent, did, in the state of his innocence, enter into a covenant with him, the equitable terms of which were, '*Do, and live* --- *transgress, and die*.' Man had power to keep this covenant of life; but if he transgressed it, there was no provision made in the covenant of *pardon* for transgressors, or of *new strength to obey*.

5. WHEN man had broke the first covenant, and forfeited all title, not only to GOD's *covenant goodness*, but even to mercy,---(wonderful *grace*!) GOD was pleased to enter again into covenant with man. And this last covenant is well termed a *covenant of grace*; because it is founded on the *free, undeserved grace* of GOD, and the merits of the Redeemer; and because GOD's grace and Spirit are stipulated in it, to enable

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man to rise from his fallen state, and to give him strength to fulfil the conditions of it.

6. GOD being not only the *Maker* and rightful Lord of man, and infinitely *holy, just and good*; but fallen man having also forfeited his life.---GOD, I say, has a right to propose the covenant to man, and to fix the terms and conditions of it; and it is infinitely right that man entering into covenant with his Maker and Redeemer, should be willing to sign a *charte blanche*. Yet does not GOD force the will of man to consent to his gracious covenant, but only proposes it to him; shews him the equity and advantage of his complying with it, and *gently moves* him to his duty and interest, by the motives of his gospel and attractions of his holy Spirit.

7. GOD's freely tendering this covenant to sinners of mankind, is a sufficient warrant and encouragement for our taking hold of it, and entering into covenant with him; which, without this warrant, would seem dreadful presumption in such *creatures* as we are.

8. GOD's part of the covenant is all a *free and gracious promise* of something which we *do not*, and *cannot* properly *deserve* or *merit* by any thing we can do;---and our part of it is *all duty*, which we were bound to perform antecedently to any covenant promise:---And even our *ability* to do this duty, and perform these conditions, on which we are entitled to covenant blessings, is promised and offered in the covenant itself. "I will
" be their GOD, and they shall be my people.---I will
" give grace and glory, and no good thing will I withhold from them that walk uprightly.---I will take
" away the hard and stony heart, and will give them
" an heart of flesh.---I will write my law on their heart,
" and put my fear in their inward part---and I will be
" their GOD, and they shall be my people."

9. THERE is something very singular in all these forms of GOD's covenant, "*I will, and they shall.*" In

all covenants between men, the parties fulfil their own conditions, independently on each other. But God not only *proposes the covenant*, but also *gives strength and ability* to fulfil the conditions on their part; --- puts his Spirit into their hearts; writes his law in their inward parts, --- and often makes them a *willing people in the day of his power*. The very covenant itself *offers and conveys grace and strength* to fulfil it.

10. ALTHOUGH we are not properly at liberty whether we shall chuse God as our covenant God, or enter into covenant with him, or not; --- but are obliged both by *duty* and *interest* to do it, and to do it without hesitation or delay: yet our chusing him, and entering into covenant with him, must be a matter of *cordial and deliberate choice*. "Chuse ye this day whom ye will serve. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." --- God will have *our heart*; the approbation of our reason and the free and chearful consent of our mind in this matter, --- that it may not be a *constrained*, but a *reasonable and willing* service. If he constrains any to be thus happy, it is by the constraints of his *grace*; making them a *willing people* in the day of his power.

11. AS sinners, in a natural state, have neither a relish for the promises of God's covenant, nor a heart and inclination to perform the conditions of it; hence it follows, that none but gracious persons *can or will* enter into covenant with God; and that all who make a pretence of doing it, without being previously disposed and inclined by God's holy Spirit, are only *hypocrites and self-deceivers*.

12. WHAT GOD, on his part, offers in this covenant, is *himself*, principally and comprehensively: "I will be their God." And this includes *all blessedness* which any creature is capable of enjoying. When God promises to be a God to us, he promises to be a

GOD *all-sufficient* to us, to be *ours*, in *all his fullness*, according to our measure and capacity: For, if having this GOD, we are *straitened*, it is not *in him*, (as the Apostle says) but *in ourselves**; in the *narrowness* of our own capacities, not in his *infinite fulness*. He undertakes to *be to us*, and to *do for us*, all that it belongs to him, as an infinitely *wise, holy and good* GOD, to *be* and to *do*, to his covenant people.

13. WE may see then that *all good and happiness* is virtually sum'd up in this covenant offer and promise; "I will be your GOD." Accordingly, in other places of scripture, GOD, in condescension to human weakness, is more particular and explicit, in this covenant tender:—"I will give grace and glory, and no good thing will I withhold from my covenant people. All are yours. All things shall work together for good to them that are in covenant with GOD."

14. As GOD proposes *himself* in all his fulness in this covenant, according to the *measure and capacities* of his creatures; so when he makes his demand from us, of what we, on our part, are to *be* and *do*, in entering into covenant with him, he demands *ourselves* and *our all*, *absolutely* and *without reserve*; that we surrender *ourselves* and *ours*; whatever we *have, are, or can do*, wholly up to his pleasure and disposal; to do *with us, for us, in us*, and *by us*, just what seemeth good unto him.

15. As submission to GOD's *will*, and an unshaken trust and reliance on his *power, goodness, veracity* and *faithfulness*, are important conditions of this covenant, *on our part*; so, being assured of grace and glory, we are to leave *all inferior goods*, which relate meerly to our present state of existence, wholly and entirely to the *will of God*, endeavouring to subject our will, with regard to them, wholly to his, firmly believing, that every thing in our lot is appointed by infinite wisdom and

goodness, and being only concerned that all things may work together for God's glory, and our *spiritual and eternal happiness*.



E S S A Y IV.

C H A P. II.

The Same continued.

1. **M**EN may be said to enter into covenant with God either *indirectly* or *directly*.

2. THE very sustaining of a profession of religion, or appearing not to deny, but rather to avow, that we are the people of God, carries in it an implicit acknowledgment of a *covenant transaction*. The bulk of whole Christian nations appear to be thus in covenant with God.

3. IN every prayer to God, and acknowledgment of his authority over us, and right to dispose of us, there is the *matter of a covenant* with him; and though we may not intend, or directly avow any such thing, yet we do *indirectly* and *implicitly* give ourselves to God in covenant, and bring ourselves under the penalty of the covenant, if we do violate or break it.

4. The most solemn acts of directly and explicitly entering into covenant with God, are—a private surrender and self-dedication of ourselves to God:—The giving up of our children to God in baptism—and the renewing our baptismal covenant at the Lord's table.

5. A PRIVATE and solemn surrender and dedication of ourselves to God, through the Redeemer, is one of the earliest duties we should perform in religion, after we have come to understand the nature of our baptismal vows, and the obligations we are under to God. Forms of this kind may be met with in many devotional books.

6. THIS kind of covenanting should be performed in a very solemn and deliberate manner.

7. SOMETHING of the same nature ought to be done by every communicant, both in his preparation for the Lord's supper, and at the ordinance itself; wherein an express recognition should be made, of all the principal and essential parts of our covenant with God, through the Redeemer.

8. THE giving up of our children to God in baptism, is an occasion upon which we are called to an express covenant surrender of ourselves, and all that is ours to God: We do, at that time, expressly acknowledge God to be *our* God, and offer him our children, in virtue of a covenant which is supposed to subsist between God and us: And the vows we make for our children, suppose our own vows of the same kind.

9. Is it not surprising, that the same covenant which we renew with so much solemnity at the Lord's supper, is generally so superficially renewed at the baptism of the children of most Christians?

10. Is a solemn preparation is necessary in order to the right renewing of our covenant with God at the gospel supper; is it less so before we give up our children to God in baptism? Is not *equal solemnity, seriousness and devotion* necessary on both occasions?

E S S A Y V.

A FORM of renewing COVENANT with God, at the LORD'S TABLE.

AS our great business in this ordinance is to call into lively and grateful remembrance, the painful and ignominious death of our Lord Jesus Christ,

and to keep up this remembrance of it in the church and world :—As we are led to remember it not only as a *confirmation of the truth of his doctrines*, but also as a *sacrifice of atonement* for the sins of the world, and for our sins, and consequently as the highest and dearest pledge of his and his Father's love to us, and the sweetest and surest ground of our hope, as believing sinners :—And as our principal business at this sacrament, (this feast upon a sacrifice) is solemnly to *enter into*, and *renew our covenant with God*, over these dear memorials of his Son's death—over these signs and seals of the blood of the everlasting covenant :—In which solemn transaction we do profess to take and avouch God, to be our God—and to become his people, according to the terms of the covenant. I have thought it might be exceeding proper and useful upon these occasions, to rehearse and repeat at large the form of a solemn covenant transaction, as it ought to be made, in substance, by every communicant, *at or before this sacrament*.

I SHALL therefore put this form of covenanting with God, in the *first person of the singular number*—that every one of us may, upon this occasion, use it *for himself*, and make it *his own*.

LET me therefore beseech each of my fellow-communicants, as in the immediate presence of the God of heaven, and over the memorials of his Son's sacrifice—and as, on this solemn occasion, about to enter into and renew covenant with God, to let their hearts and thoughts go along with this form of a solemn covenant transaction, and cordially and deliberately to make it *their own covenant* ;—each saying in his heart with me, and saying it *sincerely and feelingly*.

" MOST great and adorable JEHOVAH ! Behold ! a poor, insignificant guilty worm of the dust, here prostrate before thee, as it were on the bended knees of my soul, acknowledging thy glorious majesty and divine perfections, thine eternal duration, infinity, self-suf-

ficiency, all-sufficiency, unchangeableness, and incomprehensibility—thine almighty power, all penetrating knowledge, unerring wisdom, unbounded goodness, unfailing faithfulness, impartial justice and undissimbled truth.

“ I DESIRE to rejoice (and O ! that the whole world would rejoice !) that there is *such a God*, and that this God ruleth in the heaven and in the earth, and doeth according to his most sacred, sovereign, and holy will throughout the universe.

“ LORD, I acknowledge with *gratitude* and *joy*, that I am thy *creature*, thy *servant*, thy *subject*, under infinite and unchangeable obligations to *know*, *serve*, *honour*, *fear*, *reverence* and *obey* thee; yea to *be* and to *do* just what thou pleasest. And I would for ever adore thee, that thou hast so closely connected my *duty*, with *thine own glory*, and my *highest interest* : That although my foundation is in the dust, all my original shame, and my nature sin—yet thou art giving encouragement to such a *base, guilty wretch* as I am and *have been*, to approach thee the *eternal all*, the fountain of all being, holiness and happiness through *JESUS CHRIST*, the eternal Son of thy love, with hopes of being pardoned, accepted and saved by his most precious merit and mediation ! LORD, what am I ? what is my *original lineage*, *descent* and *nature* ? what my *conduct*, *merit* and *desert*, that thou should’st once condescend to look down from the throne of thy majesty and holiness, upon such a creature as I *have been*, and *still am* :—That thou should’st once permit me to name thy *venerable name* with my guilty lips—much more, that thou should’st stoop to enter into covenant with me, or cause me to hope for any blessing from thee !

“ VERILY, O LORD, I *blush*, am *ashamed* and even *confounded*, at the very thoughts of this matchless grace and condescension !—And were it not that *thou LORD*, hast spoken it ;—that *it is thine own* revealed, declared will, to regard such sinners through Christ, and that

thou canst never *change, lie nor repent*; I should even now despair of any mercy at thy hands:---For, I must confess in the presence of the all-seeing, heart-trying God, whom the closest hypocrisy cannot deceive, that I have been an *unprofitable servant, a prodigal son, a wandering sheep, a barren fruitless tree, a cumberer of the ground, a vile obstinate rebel*, who, by ten thousand aggravated sins, have deserved the hottest hell!--How often hast thou called thy back-sliding creature, while I have refused?---How often hast thou stretched out thy gracious hand and merciful sceptre, while I have disregarded?---What *commandment* of thine have I not broken?---What *talent or ordinance* have I not misimproved?---What *mercy* have I not slighted?---What instance of thy grace and favour, what gift of thy providence, have I not turned into wantonness?---How far have I been from using this world so as not to abuse it?---How many duties have I neglected through *stolt and vanity*, and other *base, low, unworthy* motives?---How many sins have I committed against light, knowledge, and conscience of duty?---How many of my poor fellow-creatures (those immortal souls, for whom Christ died!) have I tempted and drawn into sin, by evil example, wicked solicitations, and foolish, light, vain, unchristian behaviour?---And therefore have *their* guilt to answer for as well as *my own*!--How unwatchfully, uncircumspectly, and unlike a child of light, and a disciple of Christ, I have walked, LORD, thou knowest?---How many *foolish, idle words and vain, sinful jests* have proceeded out of my mouth,---and how little of that which was good for the use of edifying, or that might minister grace to the hearers? How many of my poor fellow-creatures have I *corrupted and defiled*; but how few have I *edified and profited*?---How little have I watched over my *heart, my thoughts, my lips, my passions, my temper, and spirit*?---How easily have I been provoked to

anger, to revenge, to envy, to slander, to rash and uncharitable judging, and to injurious and abusive language against my neighbours, yea, against my dear christian brethren, whom I should love in the LORD *servently and unfeignedly*, and to whom I should do *good* and not *evil*, all the days of my life ! How unthankful, ungrateful, impatient, undutiful, unhumble have I been ! How shamefully defective and wanting have I been, in all the relative and social duties of life, as a child, a parent, a neighbour, a friend, a husband, a wife, a subject, a Christian !---O, alas ! How cold and stupid in prayer ! How inconstant and indevout in my attendance on holy ordinances and holy duties ! How careless in reading thy holy word, and treasuring it up in my memory !

“ O LORD, thou knowest these things altogether, and now they lie as a heavy burden upon my soul ! Now I see their folly and their *baseness* ; their *guilt* and their *treachery* ! And O ! that I might see them clearer and clearer, until the sight might pain my very heart, and make my soul sink in humility, and overflow with the tears of sincere, unfeigned contrition and repentance ! Behold, LORD, I am vile ! What shall I answer before thee ? I put my hand on my mouth, and my mouth as it were in the dust, and cry out *unclean* before thee. My sins against *light* and *love* ; against *mercies* and *corrections* ; against *advices* and *reproofs* ; against *vows, promises, resolutions and covenant engagements* ; against God the *Father*, God the *Son*, and God the *holy Ghost* ; against God, my neighbour and myself. My sins of omission and commission ; of thought, word and deed ; known and unknown ; remembered and forgotten ; of childhood, youth, and manly age :---My sins against reason and conscience ; against the *law* and the *gospel*---are next to an infinite sum ; they are far beyond my numbering ; they are in number more than the hairs on my head, or than the sands on the sea-shore, which cannot be reckoned :---

They have gone over my head ;---they have ascended up even unto heaven, and bear witness against me, crying for vengeance, like the blood of righteous *Abel*. ---And whereas the very smallest of this number is sufficient to sink me into hell, and for ever to separate me from thy gracious presence,---yet, O LORD, they are all ever before thee and in the light of thy countenance, accompanied with every circumstance of their guilt and aggravation :---For there never has been a thought in my heart, a word in my mouth, or an action in my life, but thou, O LORD, knowest it altogether. Although I have often studied to conceal and forget my sins, yet they are ever in the light of thy countenance, and recorded in the book of thine infinite knowledge and remembrance, as though they had been but just now committed !

“ LORD, be thou therefore merciful unto me a *sinner* ; a *great* and *guilty* transgressor ! *Mercy, mercy*, is my only suit ; my only plea ! *Mercy* and *pardon* through the blood of Christ, is *all my hope* and *all my salvation* !

“ O LET the King this day at his table grant me the forfeited life of my soul at my request, of *mere undeserved mercy* : For what profit is there in my blood, O thou GOD of salvation ?

“ I HAVE no righteousness of my own to plead, wherefore I should be *pardoned, justified* and *accepted* of thee to mercy ! All my righteousnesses, even the whole sum of them taken together, are but *filthy rags* ! They need pardon, but cannot deserve favour. I do, therefore, from my very heart, *renounce* and *disclaim* every kind and degree of *trust* and *dependance* on my *prayers, tears, charities, repentances, good frames, holy duties*, and *all my other best works*, for pardon and justification with thee, my GOD. Every duty which I have done since I was born, has been mixed with so much, *sin, infirmity* and *imperfection*, that they are utterly unworthy to be accepted and rewarded by a holy GOD ; unless

it be through the merit, and for the sake of Jesus CHRIST. I therefore put my whole trust in CHRIST the Mediator, as my *surety* and *atoning sacrifice*; as my *wisdom*, *righteousness*, *sanctification* and *redemption*; as my Lord and Redeemer; my Prophet, Priest and King; for *pardon*, *salvation* and *glory*: For I know of no other name given under heaven, whereby I can be saved.

" I BLESS thee, O LORD of heaven and earth, that thou art well pleased with sinners, in him the Son of thy love;—that, in him, thou art reconciling a guilty world unto thyself, not imputing their trespasses to them;—that through him sinners have access unto thee the Father;—that thou hast exalted him by thy right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give *repentance and remission of sins*;—that whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life;—that through his blood we have remission, even the full forgiveness of all sin; that whosoever cometh unto him by faith, he will in no wise cast out,—and that I, even I, have liberty to enter into an everlasting covenant with thee, through him, who is the way, the truth, and the life; the true and living way unto thee the Father.

" BEHOLD, therefore, with an eye of compassion thy *returning prodigal*, thy *lost sheep*, desiring to come unto thee in *this way*, which thou thyself hast appointed me. I desire to come, LORD draw me by thy holy Spirit; I desire to believe, LORD help thou mine unbelief! I desire to come *wearied and heavy-laden* under the burden of my sins; LORD increase a sense of their insupportable weight, and give me *that rest*, which thou hast graciously promised! I desire to surrender my soul and body to thee, with all their powers and faculties—all that I am, have, and can do, sensible of thy right to them by creation, preservation and redemption; and sorry, heartily sorry, that I ever strayed from thee in any instance, or ever served satan or my own lusts. LORD, do thou graciously accept the surrender through CHRIST, and

make me in all things, just what thou would'st have me to be. Make me *worthy of thee* and *fit for thy enjoyment*.

“ I CALL heaven and earth, thyself, thy holy angels, and my fellow-communicants, to witness, *this day* that *here*, over the memorials of thy Son's sacrifice, I do take and avouch thee, O thou eternal God, to be my covenant God, and my heavenly Father through Christ. — O save thy creature, thy servant, thy subject, thine unworthy child, who putteth his trust in thee, and chuseth thee as his chief good and everlasting portion ! O lift upon me the light of thy countenance ; be reconciled unto me through Christ ; manifest thyself unto me, so as thou dost not unto the world : Let all thy divine perfections be engaged for my protection, support, comfort and direction, through the straits and difficulties, the dangers and temptations of this wicked world ; through the dark valley of the shadow of death, and into thy blissful and happifying presence, in the world of spirits above. Let no evil spirit, or evil lust, be ever permitted to pluck me out of thy gracious hands ; but lead me by thy counsel here, and afterwards receive me to glory. And now, O God, that I am *thine* by this *express self-dedication*, employ me wholly in thy service, and use me as an instrument of thy glory. Make me faithful unto the death, and give me a crown of life. Not *my will* but *thy will* be done, both by me, in me, and concerning me. I trust thy wisdom and mercy with my temporal and eternal *all*, and only desire a will to submit and resign to thee in all things, and to acquiesce in all thy dealings and dispensations, as knowing them to be infinitely the *wisest* and the *best*.”

“ I CALL heaven and earth to witness *this day*, over these solemn pledges of redeeming love, that I do take the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the second person of the blessed Trinity, to be my LORD and *Savior* ; my *head* and *husband* ; my *surety*, *propitiation* and *advocate* ; my

prophet, priest and king; my righteousness and strength, my mediator, example and almighty friend! O blessed Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy upon me! I desire to commit and betrust my guilty, precious, perishing soul, with all its everlasting concerns, into thy *faithful, powerful, compassionate* hands; and would desire above all things, a farther and more experimental knowledge of thy *power and grace*, whom I thus trust with mine eternal all, that so my faith and hope may be yet stronger, and my doubts and fears fewer in number and of less strength. Lord I believe; help thou mine unbelief;---I know that the Father hath committed *all power* to thee; hath made thee head over all things for the good of the church; hath constituted thee a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins; I also *know and believe*, that thou thyself art the *all-sufficient God*; and, as mediator, art *perfect God and perfect man*, and therefore art every way qualified to be a Saviour for lost and undone sinners.---And as thou art *perfectly qualified*, so thou hast often declared thy *great willingness* to seek and to save those that are lost.---*LORD, save me, thy lost sheep.*---Save me from my sins which are many, and from thy fearful divine judgments which they have deserved; for thou, LORD, art mighty and able to save unto the uttermost, all sinners that come unto God by thee.---*I take and avouch thee for my prophet*: O reveal thy word in my heart---write thy law there---put thy fear there, and give me the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of thyself, and of thy Father.

“*I TAKE thee for my priest*:---O plead the everlasting merit and efficacy of thy sacrifice and of thy blood with the Father, on my behalf, who have no merit of my own.---O thou beloved *Son of God*, thou *Lamb of God* who takest away the sin of the world, whom the Father always heareth, and who never prayest in vain---intercede for me with thy Father, that my sins may

be pardoned for the sake of what thou hast done and suffered, and that I may be clothed with thy most perfect and spotless righteousness. I would receive thee this day, O thou *bleeding Lamb of God*, into a *broken and bleeding heart*;—a heart pierced with sorrow for my sins, and flaming with gratitude for the precious fruits of thy dying love.

“ I TAKE and *avouch* thee this day, O blessed Jesus, for my *King and Lawgiver*: LORD, take the possession and dominion of my heart;—rule supreme there;—cast out all thine enemies, my lusts, my evil and ungoverned thoughts and passions;—bring my will and every affection under the authority and direction of thy laws and thy Spirit.

“ I TAKE thee, O blessed Jesus, this day, for my *head and husband*:—O make me a living member of thy mystical body.---May I daily and hourly derive strength, vigour, spiritual nourishment and growth in grace from thee, the living head of divine influences.---Let this be the day of my spiritual espousals.---Betroth me unto thy self:—Adorn me with the wedding garment of thy righteousness:---Let me, with the king's daughter, be all glorious within; clothed with the garment of holiness, even that white raiment of needle work, which is the righteousness of the saints, that my soul may be as a bride adorned to meet her husband:---Take me into thy banqueting house, and let thy banner over me be love.---“ Awake, O north wind; come thou south, and blow upon my garden, that the odorous spices of divine grace may flow forth; and then let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. Kiss me with the kisses of thy mouth, for thy love is better than wine!” Prepare me for thine eternal embraces; and make me a welcome and happy guest at the wedding supper of the Lamb.

" I DO this day, take thee, O blessed Jesus, for my *elder brother* and *forerunner*, who hast taken possession of the promised inheritance, in the name of all thy followers :—O do thou prepare a place, even one of the lowest and humblest mansions in thy Father's house for me ; that I may be for ever with thee, to see thy glory and be a humble and thankful partaker of thy happiness.

" I AVOUCH thee, this day, for mine *almighty* and *everlasting friend* ;---as a friend who art here giving me an amazing and astonishing proof, both of the reality and greatness of thy friendship, in these memorials of thy *bitter passion*, and *bleeding, dying love* : O do thou enkindle in my heart suitable returns of love and friendship. Let me die, rather than not to love thee. —Let me be annihilated, rather than be thine enemy. —Stand by, and support me, in a course of faithful, persevering obedience.—Stand by, and support and comfort me, when all my earthly friends must leave me, and when all their kindest wishes and warmest affections, can afford me no succour or relief.—Stand by, O almighty friend, in the chilling hour of death.—Let thy staff and thy rod then comfort me ; and do thou, who hast the keys of death and of the invisible world, be my gracious guardian and conductor, into the cloudless regions of *joy, serenity, peace, and glory*.

" I DO call heaven and earth, and all my christian brethren to witness this day, over these dear and solemn pledges of redeeming love, that I do take the HOLY GHOST, the third person of the ever-blessed Trinity, to be my *sanctifier*, my *enlightener*, my *renewer*, my *guide* and *comforter* ; praising God for the inestimable gift of his holy Spirit : O thou *heavenly dove*, do thou descend upon my soul, as a *fuller's soap* and *refiner's fire* :---Descend, bearing the olive branch of peace, love, joy and comfort. Make thine

abode in my soul, as in thy spiritual temple :—Shed abroad thy divine influences in my heart :—Banish every lust thence :—Renew, sanctify, quicken, comfort and seal it, to the day of redemption : Be in me a Spirit of peace, love, joy, and of a sound mind ; and do thou, I humbly beseech thee, never be provoked to leave or forsake me, until thou hast sanctified me throughout, and fitted me for heavenly glory.

“ AND now O blessed LORD, behold I am *thine* !—*Thine* by creation, preservation, and redemption !—*Thine* by this express covenant engagement, which I desire in the most serious, solemn and affectionate manner to renew at thy table, over the dear pledges of that blood, by which it was ratified and sealed on thy part ! I would now embrace the *precious promises* of it, and chuse them for my portion.—I would now resolve, in thy strength, to perform the duties and conditions of it ; and to wait upon thee day by day, for fresh supplies of this strength. I wait, O LORD, for thy salvation ! I crave not great things in this world. Order all things relating to my body and temporal concerns, just as thy wisdom and goodness will judge most meet for me ; only let my soul be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

“ AND as, after I have renewed this my covenant at thy table, I am again to go forth into a *sinful, deluding* world, where I shall be surrounded with fresh temptations :—O let me ever bear this solemn covenant transaction in my mind, that I may not prove treacherous to my *dearest* LORD ;—that I may not add the guilt of perjury to that of unfaithfulness. O ! let me ever bear about with me such a sense of the dying love of my dear Redeemer, as may engage me to the most chearful and universal obedience to his laws.—Let me never prove a scandal and disgrace to the Christian name, by apostacy, or infidelity ;—and to thy name shall be the praise and glory, through eternal ages. Amen.”

E S S A Y VI.

The NATURE, DESIGN, and USE of the LORD'S SUPPER.

1. **S**ACRAMENTS are solemn ordinances instituted by Christ; *representing, sealing and applying* Christ, and his purchased benefits to the souls of believers.

2. THERE are *two* such in the New Testament, *viz. baptism and the Lord's supper*, answering to *circumcision and the paschal lamb* in the Old Testament dispensation of the covenant of grace.

3. THESE sacraments are institutions of a positive, and not of a moral nature; deriving all their worth from the authority which enjoins them, and as binding upon us as any moral duties whatever.

4. THESE gospel sacraments are not burthensome, expensive and laborious; but cheap and easy, and yet of useful significancy.

5. BAPTISM fitly represents our need of being *washed by the blood*, and *sanctified by the Spirit* of Christ, which are both emblematically set forth by the cleansing, purifying nature of the element of water made use of in that ordinance; and it is to be *but once* administered as an *initiatory ordinance*, on our first entering into the church of Christ.

6. As, in baptism, we take upon us the profession of Christianity, and submit to the whole religion of Christ, we do virtually oblige ourselves in this ordinance, to receive the Lord's supper.

7. THE Lord's supper obliges us to the same duties as baptism, and no more, nor any other: Both are *signs and seals of the same covenant*. The specific difference seems to lie here: Baptism is *but once* administered as an

initiatory ordinance;—the Lord's supper often, as a strengthening and nourishing ordinance: Baptism has a more special reference to the *religion of Christ*:—The Lord's supper, to CHRIST, the author and founder of it. How falsely then do many baptized Christians imagine themselves under *fewer obligations* to holiness, than *communicants*?

8. 'THE Lord's supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is shewed forth; and the worthy receivers are (not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith) made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace*.'

9. THIS sacrament is enjoined on all Christians, as a pledge of their duty, obedience and allegiance to Christ, the glorious captain of salvation; and to keep up in their hearts a grateful remembrance of his dying love.

10. IT was instituted by Christ, just before his death, after he had eat his last passover; is enjoined upon his followers by his dying command, and is to be continued by them to the end of the world.

11. THE *specific nature and proper notion* of this ordinance, is, 'A memorial of Christ's sacrifice; or a keeping up the fresh remembrance of his death in the church, together with the cause, design and benefits of it; all which benefits are sealed and applied to believers in receiving it:' *This do in REMEMBRANCE of me, and as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do SHEW FORTH the Lord's death, 'TILL HE COME†.*

12. BOTH the sacraments are standing evidences of our guilty, polluted state by sin, and of the hope we have of pardon and cleansing through Christ.

* See the Assembly's shorter Catechism.

† 1 Cor. xi. 23,—29. Luke xxii. 19, 20.

13. In preparing to receive, and in actually receiving the Lord's supper, we are led to consider the death of Christ, on which it is founded, in the following important and interesting views—In contradistinction to Jews, we are led to consider the cross of Christ as *his* and *our* glory; we are led to consider his death as that of a *martyr* or *witness*, to the truth of the doctrines which he taught, and as that of our example living and dying;—and also as a *sacrifice*, by which the sin of man was expiated: And this sacrament we are led to consider, as a *feast upon a sacrifice*; from which view of it, many important considerations arise,—as, (1.) It naturally reminds us of the evil and accursed nature of sin, which needed such an expensive sacrifice.—(2.) Of the incomprehensible love of God, who furnished such a sacrifice for the expiation of human guilt.—(3.) As those who *feasted upon a sacrifice*, were supposed to be in a state of favor with the Deity to whom the sacrifice had been offered, and to be in perfect friendship one with another; so thus feasting on the sacrifice of Christ, denotes our fellowship and communion with the Father and the Son, and that we are united together in the strictest bonds of Christian charity and love.—(4.) This sacrament being a *feast upon a sacrifice*, we ought to consider it as a proper form of renewing covenant with God, and a sign and means of our participating in the blessings of this covenant,---(5.) This sacrament represents the death of Christ as that of a conqueror, who conquered in dying, and who, by his resurrection, has secured victory for all his followers.—(6.) His death, as represented in this sacrament, should be considered as the ground of his exaltation, and of that extensive dominion and power which he now holds in the heavenly world, for the good of his church: And, (7.) While we here contemplate his death, our thoughts should spring upward to his glorified state, and forward, to his second, triumphant ap-

pearance, when we shall have reason to glory in a once crucified master.

14. THE chief *use and design* of this sacrament, is to *perpetuate*, and, as it were, to *eternize* the memory of the love of God and of Christ to us; to actuate, enkindle and enflame our love and gratitude to them; to bring frequently into our remembrance the most powerful motives to universal holiness, and to unite the hearts of Christians in the firmest and most endearing bonds of love.

15. NONE seem to have a right to this ordinance, in the sight of GOD, but the *true disciples of Jesus*.

16. NONE have a right to it, in the sight of men, but such as appear, in a judgment of charity, to be *real Christians*.

17. NONE therefore should be admitted to it, without a due, previous examination of their Christian knowledge, and some evidence of their sincerity in religion.

18. THOSE who have been admitted upon mistaken notions of their sincerity, may be again excluded, when the church receives proof of such mistakes.

19. No person ought to approach this ordinance, without *actual* preparation for it: Though, if they are *habitually* serious, their actual preparation, (when unexpected opportunities of communicating offer themselves) need cost them but little time or trouble; and, it is a childish and a dangerous superstition, to imagine, that any certain time, or any certain number of devotions, are absolutely necessary in order to our acceptance in this ordinance.

E S S A Y VII.

That HABITUAL and ACTUAL PREPARATION which is necessary for worthily receiving the LORD'S SUPPER, more fully considered,

1. **D**IVINES sometimes distinguish our preparation for the sacrament of the supper, into *habitual* and *actual*.

2. **HABITUAL** preparation seems to imply two things; *first*, A *gracious state*; and *secondly*, A *regular, pious, circumspect life*.

3. It seems evident from the very nature and design of this ordinance, that it belongs only to *true disciples* and *real Christians*. It is a nourishing ordinance; but such only can be nourished as have *life*: Besides, the graces of faith, love, hope, &c. which are properly exercised in this ordinance, can only be exercised by *real, living Christians*. It is a solemn renewal of our covenant with God; but how can those renew a covenant, which they never entered into at all? How can such as are in league with the devil and their lusts, be said to enter into covenant with God? What sincerity can there be in such a transaction as this? Does it not imply the most insolent, bare-faced mockery?

4. It implies also a *regular, pious, circumspect life*, such as becometh the gospel of Christ; That a man's life correspond in some measure with his profession, and the truth and sincerity of his religion appear visible, in the genuine and exemplary fruits of it.

5. **THOSE** who have *this habitual preparation of soul* for holy ordinances, need be under no scruple of approaching the Lord's table upon the shortest warning; because, having the essentials of religion, and a habitual

seriousness and sobriety of spirit, their sincere endeavours to please God in the way of commanded duty, can never be unacceptable to him, nor unavailable to themselves. It would, therefore, be sinful in such to abstain from a sealing ordinance, meerly because they have not had much time to make a formal, actual preparation; because, having already those good dispositions which such a preparation is intended to beget, such a preparation is not absolutely necessary; and not to dispense with it, in such circumstances, would be superstition, not religion.

6. YET where time and opportunity permit, the very best men should by no means neglect a careful, actual preparation of soul for attending so solemn an ordinance. For (1.) It is expressly commanded: *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup**. (2.) The business to be transacted at the Lord's table is of a very solemn nature: It is no less than entering into, or renewing covenant with the great God, over the memorials of his Son's sacrifice:---And whoever considers what kind of creatures we are; the nature, terms and conditions of the covenant, and how solemnly, and circumspectly every part of it should be transacted, and that this is the principal business of an actual preparation (which should by no means be neglected 'till we come to the Lord's table) will surely see reason for some time and care in this business, when we can command it. (3.) The very best men are not always in a proper frame of mind, for the most common and ordinary duties of religion: Good men find it necessary to take some pains with their hearts for the right performance of the duties of *prayer* and *hearing the word*, and surely proportionably more care should be taken in preparing for the sacrament of the supper.

* 1 Cor. xi. 28.

7. ACTUAL preparation consists in a careful endeavour, to put the heart and affections in the best frame and posture possible for approaching God in this holy ordinance; and is expressed in scripture, under the general notion of self-examination: *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat, &c.*

8. THE things concerning which we ought principally to examine ourselves, are our *knowledge, faith, love or charity, repentance, and new obedience.*

9. A KNOWLEDGE of ourselves, our *sins, wants, weakness, guilt and danger*; a competent knowledge of God, his perfections and laws, the obligations we are under to him, and the duties we owe him; --- a knowledge of the Saviour, and the way of salvation by the new covenant; --- and a competent knowledge of the sacrament of the supper, the graces there to be exercised, and the duties there to be performed, is indispensably necessary, in order to our rightly and worthily partaking of the Lord's supper; lest, *not discerning the Lord's body, we eat and drink judgment to ourselves* †.

10. FAITH in Christ, as the Son, and sent of God; and in his power and grace as an all-sufficient and most willing Saviour, is a grace, the exercise of which is of absolute necessity in this ordinance; and as there is no receiving or applying of Christ, without this grace, it is necessary we should examine ourselves concerning the reality of it, before we approach this ordinance, lest we should be found *mockers of God.*

11. As the *eucharist* or *sacrament of the supper*, is founded on the inconceivable love of God and Christ, to a lost world, and is intended as a badge, sign, means and cement of love and unity among Christian brethren, --- love to God and man, is a grace of absolute necessity in all worthy communicants; and therefore, the truth and reality of it in our hearts

† 1 Cor. xi. 29.

should be carefully examined into, before we venture to approach this gospel banquet : For, to approach this *love-feast* without *supreme love* to God, and *cordial affections* for our fellow-Christians, or while the contrary, temper prevails in the soul, would be the vilest abuse.

12. WE have already observed, that impenitent sinners, or those who live allowedly in the course or practice of any one known sin, have no right to this ordinance ; and this may shew the necessity of examining ourselves of the truth and reality of our *repentance*, in order to our approaching this sacrament worthily.

13. WE can by no means have a satisfying evidence of the truth of our *faith*, *love*, or *repentance*, unless we are conscious, that our lives are bettered and reformed, and that we have been enabled, at least for some while past, to pay a *new obedience* to the divine laws : For, the only satisfying proof we can have of the *truth of our graces*, is the *fruit of holiness* which they produce in our lives and conversations ; and so from the goodness of the fruit, we rationally infer the goodness of the tree. It is highly convenient therefore, for all who design to approach the sacrament, to try their sincerity in religion by this *touchstone* ; and not rashly to believe, that they are possessed of the sacramental graces and qualifications, 'till they feel the energy of them warm at their hearts, and experience the fruits of them, in some degree of holiness of life.

14. NOT only must worthy communicants have these graces *in reality* ; but the principal design of *actual preparation* is to bring them into *lively exercise*, by prayer, meditation, self-examination, reading the scriptures, and other proper devotional books. By frequent meditations on the heinousness of sin ; dignity, sufferings, shame and death of Christ, who was the atoning sacrifice for sin ; the wonderful love of God in providing such a sacrifice, and freely deliver-

ing him up for us all ; the invaluable benefits and blessings procured for penitent believers by this sacrifice :---By frequent meditations of this kind, the *faith* of communicants should be increased and strengthened : their *love* inflamed ; their sorrow for sin, indignation against it, and repentance of it perfected, and their resolutions to holy obedience invigorated : So that when they actually approach the Lord's table, these graces may not move heavily and awkwardly for want of use, as though the chariot wheels of the soul were taken off ; but in a brisk, lively, active and vigorous manner, like the *chariots of Aminadab* ; each acting in its proper sphere, and all of them harmoniously and in concert, lifting up the soul towards heaven.

15. HENCE may be drawn a powerful argument for the *frequent* receiving of the Lord's supper : For, if the right receiving of the Lord's supper requires the vigorous exercise of all the noblest graces of the Christian religion ;---if it is indeed an *epitome* or *summary* of the whole of practical Christianity ;---if it be necessary for those who would worthily receive this ordinance, to meditate on the *chief, vital* doctrines of our holy religion, and to exercise its noblest graces, by the way of preparation for this duty.---It may hence be inferred, that the *oftener* we receive this sacrament aright, *i. e.* the *more frequently* our souls are employed in those divine preparatory exercises, the more rapidly must they grow in knowledge and in grace, and be fitted for every good word and work.

16. SINCE all the benefit to be reaped from holy ordinances, is only to be expected by a *proper preparation* for them, and a due *attendance* on them, it is not at all to be wondered at, that the souls of those who receive the sacrament, without due preparation, do decay and go backwards in religion : For, to trifle with holy things, betrays such an irreverence and atheism of heart, as must needs, in time, provoke

God wholly to withdraw his good Spirit from such triflers, and leave them totally under the power of *blindness of mind and hardness of heart*. Hence it often happens, in fact, that *careless, untender and uncircumspect* professors of religion, turn out, in the end, *tenfold more reprobate, profligate and abandoned*, than other sinners, who have never thus profaned and abused the sacraments.



E S S A Y VIII.

Our proper DUTY immediately after receiving the LORD'S SUPPER, and that Course of Life, in Consequence of it, by which we may most effectually Honor our CHRISTIAN Profession.

1. **W**E should retire as soon as possible to examine ourselves, of our frames and exercises of mind at this holy ordinance.
2. If we find that we have had lively exercises of the sacramental graces, we should humbly and heartily thank God for the aids of his Spirit, and importunately beseech him to continue these gracious frames, and preserve us from forfeiting them by fresh acts of sin.
3. If we find that our frames and affections have been dull, dead, or trifling, we ought attentively to consider from whence this may have proceeded. If we are conscious that we have been at due pains to prepare our hearts, and that we have indulged no wilful sin; and if we find that our dullness and coldness was matter of grief to us at the ordinance, we ought not to be over-much dejected, but hope that it may

have proceeded from bodily indisposition, and that we may have nevertheless been accepted. We should also beseech God to vouchsafe those comforts now, which were withheld from us at his table, and that he would enable us perseveringly to seek them. But,

4. If we find that this uncomfortable frame has been owing to carelessness, and a want of due preparation on our part, or has proceeded from a consciousness of guilt from some indulged iniquity or unmortified lust, we should deeply lament such a criminal circumstance before God, apply earnestly to the blood of sprinkling for cleansing, and implore the divine pardon and mercy through Christ.

5. It becomes us immediately after this ordinance, to renew our holy resolutions, and to call up all our vigilance, for the two following reasons: (1.) *Satan* is peculiarly busy, after sealing ordinances, in endeavouring to rob us of the comforts of religion; to undo what was done at the ordinance; and either to cajole us into *security*, or to drive us into *despair*; and, generally speaking, the greater sensible comfort we have had in the ordinance, the greater danger shall we be in of falling into *spiritual pride* or *fatal security* after it. It has been also observed, that men are liable to fall into the heaviest temptations immediately after sacraments. *Satan's* most violent assaults upon our Saviour, happened immediately after his baptism, the visible descent of the holy Ghost upon him, and that signal honor done him, by a voice from the excellent glory*; and it was on the back of his first sacrament, and after the most confident and sanguine resolutions of *Peter*, that he was tempted to deny his Lord and Master, and so scandalously yielded to the temptation†. (2.) It becomes us to renew and strengthen our resolutions, that our Christian profession may be adorn-

* Luke iii. 21, 22.—iv. 1, &c.

† Mark xiv. 29,—71.

ed, and that Christianity may not suffer by our follies and indiscretions.

6. THESE good resolutions should be formed *wholly* and *only* in the strength of Christ; and indeed, *this itself* ought to be one of our most solemn resolutions, that we will *live wholly by faith on the Son of God*. This is that all-important doctrine of humility and self-denial which is inculcated upon us, throughout the whole gospel, and which is indeed the very *spirit and genius* of the gospel itself, that, renouncing all self-righteousness and self-dependance, we are to rely wholly on the righteousness and strength of the Redeemer: going forth to perform all duty, and to encounter all temptation, only in his strength and in the power of his might; casting all our cares upon him who careth for us, and desiring to be found only in him, clothed with his righteousness. Had *Peter's* good resolutions been formed in this manner, he could never have fallen; The arm of omnipotence would have been his sure defence, and his head would have been shielded in the day of battle.

7. If our souls have been properly exercised at this sacrament, our conduct and conversation will shine afterwards with a peculiar lustre. Holy exercises will probably shew themselves by their natural fruits. Our faces will shine like that of *Moses* when he returned from conversing with God on the mount; and we shall give the world occasion to *take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus**.

8. It will be advantageous after sacraments, expressly to mention our sacramental engagements in all our prayers, as an expedient to keep a solemn sense of them alive on our minds.

9. WHEN we are called out in the course of providence to encounter any trial, temptation or difficult and self-denying duty (which must frequently be the

* Acts iv. 14.

case with every Christian) we should call to remembrance, this our solemn covenant, so publicly transacted, and so lately renewed; and ask our consciences what conduct will best become us as communicants, who have bound ourselves by solemn and public vows to be the Lord's, and to live wholly to his honor and glory.

10. THAT course of life by which we may best honor our Christian profession after this sacrament, seems to be the following. (1.) Our conversation ought in all things to be such as becometh the gospel of Christ*. (2.) We should have a constant eye to the example of Christ, and carefully study it, as laid down in the gospel, with a particular design of being conformed to it†. (3.) We should endeavour to shew the world by our outward deportment, that we enjoy a serene, cheerful and happy state of mind; Yet at the same time we should guard in a particular manner, against discovering a relish for *sensual, sinful indulgences*, or a disposition to levity, trifling and vanity. (4.) It is of the utmost importance to the honor of our profession, that we *govern our passions*; as Christian professors, who indulge *anger, malice, envy, covetousness, revenge*, or the like, are the foulest blots and scandals of religion. (5.) If communicants would not be guilty of crucifying their Lord afresh, let them be careful of truth in their words, faithfulness in their promises, honesty in their dealings, modesty, sobriety and temperance in their lives, and that on all occasions they speak honourably of religion.

* Phillip. i. 27. Eph. iv. 1. &c. Col. i. 10. 1 Thes. ii. 12.
† Matth. xvi. 24. 1 Pet. ii. 21. 1 John ii. 6. Rom. viii. 29.

E S S A Y IX.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS *on the* INCARNATION *and*
BIRTH of CHRIST, *proper before or after the LORD's*
SUPPER.

1. **F**ROM the amazing change of circumstances which our Lord underwent in his incarnation, we have an astonishing demonstration of the riches of GOD's love to our world, and of his mercy to lost sinners.

2. ALSO of the unspeakable condescension of Christ: And this is amazingly heightened by his perfect foreknowledge of every circumstance of *pain, shame and poverty*, which should accompany his incarnation, and the long space of time in which he should suffer this eclipse of glory, and series of ignominious sufferings.

3. FROM that abasement, poverty and pain to which Christ stooped that he might save human sinners, and to which his loving Father freely delivered him up for us all, we may and must infer the unspeakable *importance of a human soul*, and of its redemption and salvation: Also, the *dreadful evil of sin and eternal misery*, its just wages, to deliver us from which, the *Son of God* condescended to be *born of a woman*, and to *die on a cross*!

4. FROM this wonderful stoop of humility and condescension in the *Son of God*, and those abasing humiliating circumstances, in which he chose to appear in our nature, we learn how little value GOD sets on those things which are so highly esteemed among men; I mean worldly riches, grandeur, honour and high estate. —And hence we see worldly pride and vanity, worldly ambition and avarice, or immoderate desire of worldly riches, in their true light, and have the best antidote against them.

5. FROM the mean and obscure birth and humble circumstances of the *Son of God*, compared with his amiable and divine character, we are taught not to despise men on account of their obscure birth, or humble circumstances in life, but to form our estimate of them and respect for them, on their moral characters, personal worth, and the God-like qualities and perfections of the soul and inward man, which alone are estimable in themselves, and in the critical discerning eye of God.

6. From the obscure birth and humble circumstances of the *Son of God*, the poor, needy and despised things of this world may borrow an argument of consolation in their mean and straightened circumstances. Why should a real Christian be mortified by the contempt of the world, when this was precisely his Master's case? Nay, ought it not rather to be an honour to the *pious poor*, that they are in the same circumstances with their divine Master, who was despised of men, and had not where to repose his venerable head?

7. OUR Saviour's mean birth and low circumstances, may teach us how little account we should make of the things of *time and sense* in general, and how little all worldly pomp, honour and splendor can contribute to our true happiness. Who so happy and blessed as the *Son of God*? Who so contented as he? And yet who so *poor and despised*? And this should also teach us how we should stand affected to worldly things—That *quietness* and *self-deniedness* of children; that holy indifference with regard to worldly things, and that *meekness, humility and contentedness* of mind, which is to distinguishing a characteristic of the children of God, and the disciples of Christ.

E S S A Y X.

ADOPTION *into the FAMILY of GOD.*

1. **M**EN are called the *sons of GOD* in various senses in scripture,—as invested with worldly honours and titles*,—as in external covenant with God†,—and as GOD's creatures and offspring‡.—The angels are also called *sons of GOD*§; and Jesus Christ is the *Son of GOD* by way of eminence, and in a very singular and peculiar sense: But believing sinners only are the *sons of GOD* by *regeneration* and *adoption*.

2. **ADOPTION** is a word borrowed from the civil law, and signifies the chusing of a stranger by those who have an estate, and no issue, and giving him the political and legal relation of a son and heir to their estate, and engaging to deal by him as though he were the issue of their own body.

3. **WE** are all, by nature, children of wrath, children of the devil, and strangers and enemies to GOD. GOD's adopting us, is therefore, a more generous and merciful act than human adoption, and differs from it in the following respects.—(1.) When men adopt, they fix their love on strangers, because they are destitute of children; but GOD need not have done this, seeing he sustains the relation of a Father to myriads of holy and happy beings, who have never, by apostacy, forfeited his paternal love. (2.) Some excellence or hopefulness in the persons adopted by men, is generally the motive of their adopting them; but GOD saw nothing in us amiable, excellent, promising or engaging, but every

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* Psal. lxxxii. 6.

† Exod. iv. 22.

‡ Mal. ii. 10. Acts xvii. 28.

§ Job xxxviii. 7.

thing just the reverse*. (3.) Men cannot change the temper or disposition of those whom they adopt; but GOD gives a temper and disposition suitable to the relation: They receive from him *the Spirit of adoption*, whereby they cry, *Abba, Father*†.

4. WE are adopted by GOD *in Christ*, and all the blessings which GOD gives us, as his sons, flow to us *in and through Christ*, as the channel of their conveyance. Christ, in consequence of *his Sonship* is made *heir of all things*‡, and the whole inheritance of GOD's *human family*, is put into the hands of their elder brother for them. Indeed, he has purchased the inheritance in their name and stead, and has the right of dispensing it to his human brethren; so that adopted sinners are *heirs of GOD*, and *joint heirs with Christ*, in whom is treasured up all fulness for their supply§.

5. THE privileges of believers, in consequence of their adoption, are exceeding many, gracious and astonishing. Their state and relation is altered: From being children of the *devil*, they are become the children of GOD by faith in Jesus Christ, and have GOD's name, and his Son's name put upon them||;—from being slaves to the *devil* and their lust, they are restored to the glorious liberty of the *sons of GOD*; they are taken into GOD's family and household, are made fellow-citizens with the saints, and, in consequence of this, are entitled to protection, provision, and communion with their Father. Particularly, they are promised protection**; plentiful provision††; *sweet intimacy* and *communion* with GOD in Christ‡‡; *bold and free ac-*

* Ezek. xvi. 5, &c.

† Rom. viii. 15.

‡ Eph. i. 3.

§ Luke xxii. 29. Rom. viii. 19. John xx. 17. 1 Cor. i. 3.

|| Isa. lxiii. 19. Eph. iii. 10.

** Isa. xxxii. 2, 18.

†† Psal. xxiii. Isa. xl.

‡‡ John xiv. 21, 23.—xv. 15. Rev. iii. 20.

cess to him as children to a Father*; and correction when they stand in need of it†. They have, in short, GOD himself for their portion—"Heirs of GOD: All "are yours, and ye are GOD's, and GOD is Christ's." Rich and glorious inventory! They are also at length introduced into the immediate presence of their heavenly Father, in the upper mansions, and fully satisfied with his love, being according to the capacities of their nature, perfectly assimilated to his image and likeness; of which glorious event, the apostle *John* speaks with astonishment and rapture‡.

6. THE marks of the adopted children of GOD, are in general, a *reverential, submissive, loving and obedient* temper of mind. If we are indeed the *children of GOD*, we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, *Abba, Father*. We feel that inward reverence towards GOD, and respect and veneration for him, which a dutiful child does to a loving and respectable father.

7. IF we have the Spirit of adoption, we feel supreme love for our heavenly Father, and this will shew itself in the following things: (1.) We shall entertain worthy and delightful thoughts of GOD, as a most kind, gracious, reconciled Father in Christ; the thoughts of him will be very precious, and our meditations of him will be sweet§. (2.) We shall delight to draw near to GOD in prayer, with an humble boldness and freedom of soul—to hear *of him* and *from him* in his word—and earnestly desire communion with him in all holy ordinances of worship. (3.) We shall have a real zeal for GOD's honour and glory in the world; rejoice to see *our Father* honoured, and his interest flourishing, and be grieved at heart to see him neglected,

* Heb. iv. 16. Gal. vi. 5. Rom. viii. 15.

† Heb. xii. 6, 11.

‡ 1 John iii. 1, 3.

§ Psal. cxxxix. 17.—civ. 34.

blasphemed and dishonoured by sinners: And, (4.) We shall earnestly wish and long for a full conformity to our heavenly Father, and the full enjoyment of his love and presence for ever, in his upper house.

8. If we are indeed God's children by adoption, and do supremely love him that begat, we shall also love all them that are begotten of him. We shall love the whole *Christian brotherhood*, so far as they bear the image of their heavenly Father, by whatever names known, into whatever sects or parties split and divided.—Yea, we shall be linked in bonds of tenderest affection, to the whole numerous family both in heaven and on earth, whether our *human brethren* by adoption and regeneration, or our *angelical brethren* by creation and unsinning rectitude and obedience. All who, with us, can call God *Father*, will have a distinguished place in our benevolent and complacential affections*.

* Eph. iii. 15. 1 John v. 1.



E S S A Y XI.

Of REPENTANCE.

1. **R**EPENTANCE partakes both of the nature of *conversion* and *sanctification*. Conversion begins by repentance; and it is the constant daily duty of true converts, as long as they have sinful natures and imperfect characters.

2. REPENTANCE implies in it, a deep and afflicting sense of the evil nature and desert of sin; an earnest desire to be freed from its guilt, dominion and condemnation, and sincere endeavours to turn from it to

the service and favour of a holy God, through a Redeemer.

3. THEREFORE the proper subject of repentance, is a sinner in the present life; For, in hell there is no place for repentance; and in heaven, though the blessed will retain the greatest hatred of sin, yet being guiltless and sinless, they can have no proper compunction or contrition for sin, nor any uneasy afflictive sensations of mind on its account. All sin and sorrow will be then for ever done away.

4. THOUGH all sinners will sooner or later be filled with sorrow and distress for what they have done against God, yet many in this life are *hardened past feeling*, through the deceitfulness of sin; have their neck as an iron sinew, their brow as brass, and live and die in this *stupid, hardened, remorseless* state, after having drowned the voice of conscience, and grieved the holy Spirit of God, which would have sealed them to the day of redemption.

5. OTHERS have also some kind of sorrow for sin, which is never effectual; some kind of repentance which is never true and saving; but, as the Apostle expresses it *needeth to be repented of*. We have examples of this in *Cain, Pharaoh, Ahab, the Israelites, Nebuchadnezzar, Judas*, and many under our own observation.

6. WE ought, therefore, carefully to distinguish between a *false* and *true* repentance; one that is merely *legal*, and one that is *evangelical*. These are distinguished by their *names* in the *Hebrew, Greek and Latin* languages, and by their *motives and effects*.

7. THE words *necham* in the Hebrew, *metameleia* in the Greek, and *pœnitentia* in the Latin, are rendered *repentance* in the English; yet they only signify, *trouble and vexation after sin*, accompanied with *anguish and torment* of mind. The words *shevah* in the Hebrew, *metanoia* in the Greek, and *resipiscentia* in the Latin, are also

translated *repentance* in the English, though they are of very different meaning from the former, and signify a *change of mind*; a *becoming wise after sin*, and consequently, a *doing better than before*. And *this last only*, is *saving, effectual, evangelical* repentance. In the former sense only, wicked men are said *to repent*, when the dread of God's wrath breaks in upon their consciences, and fills them with the terrific apprehension of their guilt, danger and misery.

8. CONVICTION of every kind, whether *legal* or *evangelical, effectual* or *ineffectual*, is wrought by the *Spirit of God*, who *convinces the world of sin**.

9. THE Spirit uses various *instruments* and *means* in awakening the soul to a distressing sight and sense of sin, such as reading and hearing the word; afflictive providences, dreams, public and private remonstrances, reproofs and admonitions, or serious reflections excited by some of these.

10. THE word of God works remorse in the hearts of sinners by discovering to them the purity of the divine nature, the extent of the divine law, the evil and danger of sin, and by leading the sinner to compare his own temper and actions with the law of God; while the Spirit enlightens the understanding, and sets home these things on the conscience †; and this is called a *law work*.

11. REPENTANCE *unto life*, or *evangelical* repentance, is wrought by the *law* and *gospel* in conjunction; acting under the influence and energy of the holy Spirit. The *law* is made to shew the soul its guilt and danger, while the *gospel* points out a remedy: The *law* wounds; the *gospel* heals: The *law* is made to enter, that sin may abound and appear exceeding sinful; the *gospel* shews how grace much more abounds through Jesus Christ ‡.

* John xvi. 8.

† Jer. xxxi. 19. Rom. vii. 12. Acts ii. 37. 2 Cor. vii. 10.

‡ Rom. v. 20.

12. A MERE *legal repentance* may be, and often is ineffectual, as in the cases of *Pharaoh, Judas*, and others; yet it is often preparatory to, and issues in an *evangelical repentance* †

13. FALSE and true, or effectual and ineffectual repentance are best distinguished by their concomitant circumstances and effects; as, (1.) A mere legal repentance, is a *terror of conscience*, arising from a *sense of guilt* and *danger*, which often consists with the love of sin, and a hatred of holiness: But the real gospel penitent truly hates and abhors sin, and himself because of it †. (2.) The true penitent forsakes sin and flees from it, not chiefly as it is *damning*, but as it is contrary to the *nature* and *will* of GOD, and a vile abuse of gospel grace; and he turns from it to GOD, with a full purpose of, and hearty endeavours after new obedience ||. (3.) True repentance is ever accompanied with *hope of mercy*; with an apprehension of the mercy of GOD in Christ, and a trust in this mercy §.

14. IT is vile and unwarrantable presumption in sinners to hope for pardon or mercy without repentance.

15. REPENTANCE is sadly mistaken by those, who imagine that it consists in being sorry or troubled for sin, while they still continue to commit it.

16. LET not distressed mourning penitents despair of GOD's mercy, which is particularly promised to such, throughout the whole scriptures*.

17. As we daily sin, repentance is our daily duty: No person in this world will ever be above the exercise of this grace, or above the need of pardon.

† Acts ii. 37, &c. — xvi. 27, 34.

‡ Psal. cxix. 104. Job. xlii. 6. Jer. ii. 34, 35. — iii. 25. Ezek. xxxvi. 31.

|| Hof. xiv. 8. Acts xi. 23. Luke xv. 18, 20.

§ 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

* Matth. xi. 28. Psal. li. 17. — xxxiv. 18. Isa. lvii. 15. Isa. lxvi. 2.

E S S A Y XII.

Of SANCTIFICATION.

1. **T**O *sanctify* is to *make holy*, and to be *sanctified* is to *be made holy*; so that *sanctification* and *holiness*, are, for the most part, synonymous terms. Sometimes, indeed, to *sanctify*, signifies, to *set apart a person for the service of God**; which has a near relation to the former sense.

2. SANCTIFICATION, as we are here to consider it, is a being *really and heartily devoted to God through Christ*: It is the health, beauty and vigour of the soul, whereby all its faculties being renewed, are enabled to *turn from sin to God*, and to exert and exercise those graces by which the sanctified person walks before God in righteousness and holiness all the days of his life, until *grace* is perfected in *glory*. In this sense all Christians are *called to be saints*, or to be sanctified; however the devil, aided by human blindness and stupidity, may have turned the term, *saints*, into ridicule among men †.

3. REGENERATION is an *instantaneous work*, or rather *act* of God's Spirit, giving a *new and divine* principle of spiritual life to the soul. *Justification* and *adoption* are *acts* of God's grace *without us*, whereby a *relative* change passes on our state: But *sanctification* is a *continued progressive work* of God's Spirit *within us*, influencing and co-operating with our endeavours, from the moment of our regeneration, until our dying day, and the complete perfection of our holiness.

* John xvii. 19. Exod. xxviii. 41.

† Rom. i. 7, &c.

4. SANCTIFICATION is begun in *conversion* and perfected in *glory*: and includes in it the exercises of *repentance*, and of all the *graces* and *virtues* of the Christian life. 'Tis a progressive work, begun, carried on, and perfected by the holy Spirit of God in the human soul; carrying it on from light to light, from strength to strength; and from one degree of holiness to another, 'till at length it appears perfect before God in *Zion*.

5. THE two principal branches of sanctification, and which comprehend all the rest, are *mortification* and *vivification*; or, as the scriptures express it, a *dying daily to sin, and living unto righteousness*.

6. DYING unto sin, or *mortification*, implies in it our utmost endeavours to guard against the prevailing power of sin; and to extirpate or root it out of our souls, by all gospel methods, and by all the instrumental means of religion which God hath appointed for that purpose. And this duty seems to imply in it the following things: (1.) Hearty endeavours to keep up a constant, lively, believing sense and apprehension of the evil nature and desert of sin, both as *defiling* and *condemning*.—(2.) Constant watchfulness against the outbreakings of corrupt nature; with frequent careful examinations whether sin is gaining or losing ground in our souls.—(3.) Constant application to God in Christ, and in the use of the means and ordinances of grace, for help against the power and love of sin:—And this *first*, by faith in the propitiation and merit of Christ for justification, and a sense of pardon—and *secondly*, by faith or trust in the promises, and more directly, in Christ himself, for power and strength to conquer every lust.

7. VIVIFICATION, or a *living unto God, or unto righteousness*, as a distinct branch of holiness or sanctification, consists properly in obtaining, cultivating,

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and improving in all the virtues and graces of the Christian life upon gospel motives and principles. In order to this, our natures must be changed by regeneration; our religious actions must be performed according to the rule of God's word; in obedience to his divine authority; in faith; to the glory of God as their chief end, and with a humble steadfast reliance on Christ both for *assistance* and *acceptance*:---And this course must be *habitual* and *persevering*; or, as the scriptures beautifully express it,---*a walking with God*.

8. We must act in religion on the following motives, in order to the advancement and perfection of our sanctification:---(1.) We must have the example of Christ habitually in our view as the pattern and model of our temper and behaviour*.---(2.) The love of Christ displayed in our redemption, and the application of it in all its steps should constrain us to love him: This is the most powerful inducement to universal gospel holiness†.---(3.) Our relation to God as his children; our professed subjection to his laws and government; the glorious hope and inheritance set before us, and the many great and precious promises made unto us in the gospel, are all of them so many *powerful motives inducing and urging us on to perfect holiness in his fear*‡. (4.) Our union to Christ, and our bodies and spirits being, in consequence, members of his mystical body, and temples of the holy Ghost, is a wonderful cogent motive, both to *mortification* and *vivification*; and, to this purpose the Apostle most beautifully and forcibly uses it, 1 Cor. vi. 15,--20.

* 1 Pet. ii. 21. Philip. ii. 5.

† 2 Cor. v. 14.

‡ 2 Cor. vii. 1.

E S S A Y XIII.

The NATURE and BLESSED EFFECTS of an UNION with CHRIST.

1. **U**NION with a person or thing, signifies *such a connexion*, as, in some sort, constitutes *sameness* or *oneness*; to be united therefore to Christ, implies, that the person so united, is in some sense, *one with him*. Christ is in some sense *one with him*, and he *one with Christ*. This is a great mystery, as the Apostle tells us; but it is a mystery plainly revealed and taught in the scriptures, and upon the right knowledge of it depends our right conceptions of vital religion, and much of the comfort of every Christian.

2. THIS union is not *essential*, like that of the three persons in the Godhead; nor *personal*, like that of the divine and human natures of Christ in the person of the Mediator;—nor *thirdly, relative, civil or political*, like that which subsists between a king and his subjects, or a master and his servants or disciples: If this were the nature of *this union*, as some Christians understand it, then would it be no mystery as the Apostle represents it*; but the plainest and most comprehensible thing imaginable: For the weakest understanding can easily understand how it is, that a king and his subjects make *one body politic*, or a master and his servants *one body domestic*. But,

3. IT is a *mystical union*. It is a *mystery*, and therefore the *modus* or *manner* of it can admit of no clear and full illustration or explanation, in the present imperfect state. It is however shadowed forth to us under many figures or metaphors, which prove, that it is a very

* Eph. v. 32.

close and intimate union, and such as transforms and assimilates the soul into the very *temper, likeness, and Spirit* of Christ, and makes it *one with him*, in some very important respects. It is compared to the union of a *vine* with its *branches*†, between a *husband* and his *wife*‡; the *corner-stone* or *foundation* and the *building*§; the *head* and *members* of the same natural body¶; the union of *meat* and *drink* with *the body*, which they nourish**; and the union between God the Father and Christ††. Believers are called *the body of Christ*, and *members in particular*, and are powerfully dissuaded from the sin of uncleanness from this very consideration. In other scriptures, believers are represented as *one Spirit with Christ*; Christ is *in them the hope of glory*, and *their life* is hid with Christ in God. St. Paul did not live, but *Christ lived in him*. Christ and believers are represented as having *one common interest*; *one God and Father*, and *one common inheritance* as joint heirs††.

4. We are not to form any gross conceptions of this mystical union between Christ and believers, as though it implied any *physical mixture or confusion* of the two beings thus united; and yet these very expressive metaphors prove, that this union must be something exceeding *close and intimate*, such as makes the soul truly a partaker of the divine nature and image of Christ; as *leavens, transforms and assimilates* it; such by which the soul imbibes (if I may so speak) the Spirit of Christ; derives strength, and vigour and nourishment from him, as its *living head*, and as the *branches* do from the *parent vine*. Christ *dwells and abides* in the believer by

† John xv. 1, &c.

‡ Eph. v. 30. Rom. vii. 4.

§ 1 Pet. ii. 4.

¶ Eph. iv. 15.

** John vi. 56.

†† John xvii. 11.

†† 1 Cor. vi. 17. Col. i. 27—iii. 3. Gal. ii. 20. Matth. xvi. 40. John xx. 17. Rom. viii. 17.

his Spirit, and the believer grows up into him in all things, which is the head. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can we, except we abide in Christ; for without him, (or out of him, disunited from him) we can do nothing;" bring forth no fruit unto righteousness*.

5. THIS is a *spiritual union*. "They that are joined to the Lord, are one spirit;" and this is true in two important senses: (1.) They partake of the same divine Spirit with their Lord and Master. To him indeed God gives not the Spirit by measure. In him it hath pleased the Father that all fullness of the Spirit and his graces should dwell; and, through this union, believers derive from him such supplies of this Spirit, and his graces, as they stand in need of. It is the very same Spirit which dwelleth in Christ, as the head, which is dispensed by him to the living members of his mystical body. All these members, whether in heaven or on earth, drink in the same Spirit, from the same never-failing fountain or repository, and are all united together in love by the same Spirit. (2.) They have also the *same temper and disposition*; the *same mind* in them which is also in Christ Jesus. His interest is their interest; and his will is their will. They have the same aims, desires, aversions, delights; the same love of God, zeal for his glory, and charity and affection for his creatures and children. And hereby they know that Christ abideth in them, by the Spirit which he hath given them; But those who have not *thus* the Spirit and temper of Christ, may be assured that they are none of his.

6. THIS union of the soul to Christ is formed by *faith*. The holy Spirit works this faith in the soul, and draws it to Christ; and faith receives Christ into the soul, and forms the bond of spiritual union between them; so that thenceforth the soul *lives in Christ*,

* John xv. 4, 5.

by *faith* and *love*, and *Christ* *lives* in the *soul* by the quickening, sanctifying and comforting influences of his holy Spirit. *Christ*, says the Apostle, *dwelleth in our hearts by faith. We dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit**.

7. THE effects of this union are many and exceeding precious: For, (1.) The moment our souls are thus united to Christ, we are in a *justified state*, in a state of acceptance and reconciliation with God, and consequently can never come into condemnation†. (2.) The moment of this union, is the moment of our *spiritual regeneration*: We then begin to be *partakers of a divine nature*, which, by virtue of this union, we receive from Christ the head of divine influences. (3.) With the first moment of this union begins our *eternal*, as well as our *spiritual life*: It is our *birth to glory*. (4.) Our progress in holiness depends entirely on this union; for severed from Christ, we can do nothing. (5.) Fellowship and communion with God is entirely the fruit and effect of this union: For, we can have no fellowship with God, but *in and through Christ*. (6.) Fellowship and communion among Christians is begun and carried on by this union: For, they are all united unto one another *in Christ*, and *to God through Christ*; and this communion is formed by their all partaking the same Spirit from Christ the head, by which as members, they are united together into one body.

8. LET us never rest satisfied, until this blessed union is formed in our own souls; and until we know that it is, by the blessed effects of it, purifying our hearts by faith, and enabling us to bring forth much fruit of holiness.---I had almost forgot to add, under the foregoing particular. That the perseverance of the saints in grace, is the blessed effect of this union; and that this union, is the strongest argument to prove it.

* Eph. iii. 17. 1 John iv. 13. 1 Cor. xii. 13.

† Rom. viii. 1.

E S S A Y XIV.

Of the FINAL PERSEVERANCE of the SAINTS.

1. **A**S every blessing is valuable in proportion to its *certainty* and *duration*, so the final perseverance of the saints in holiness, if it be true, must be a very comfortable doctrine.

2. THIS doctrine is necessarily denied by all those who imagine they can put themselves into a state of grace, and put themselves out of it, at pleasure; and indeed by many who acknowledge the necessity of supernatural and efficacious influences of the Spirit in conversion, and yet suppose this grace *amissible* by the converted sinner, who, by his abuse of his natural liberty, may *totally and finally fall from grace*.

3. WHEN we speak of a sinner's *persevering in grace*, or *falling from grace*, we mean *true grace*, or a real work of regenerating grace in the soul: For, we make no doubt, that many who have seemed to have had grace, in a judgment of charity, have fallen from that grace which they *only seemed to have*, but *had not* in reality. We have observed before, that a very specious religious character is often formed on the principles of *self-love, honor, fame, reputation* and *fear*, or the terrors of conscience, from a sight and sense of guilt and demerit, which, although it is exceeding *hollow, defective* and *imperfect*, yet often imposes not only on a credulous world, but also upon the persons who sustain it. None but God certainly and infallibly knows whether persons have true grace or not. Hypocrites often make as fair a profession as real Christians; and when such fall into a course of gross sins, we are not rashly to conclude that *men may fall from grace*, as it is impossible

for us to know whether such were ever *truly* and *really* gracious.

4. It is no objection against this doctrine, that some truly gracious persons have fallen into very gross sins; yea, into courses of sin, and thereby dishonoured Christ, and their profession of his religion. The question is, Whether truly gracious persons can ever *totally* and *finally* lose the principle of grace; *wholly* apostatize from God, and fall into reprobacy and condemnation?

5. Some have imagined, that the saints may fall *totally* from grace, but not *finally*; as in the instances of *David* and *Solomon*: But, though this would solve many difficulties, yet it does not seem to be the scripture doctrine.

6. If what we have said of *conversion* be true, it seems by no means probable, that God should regenerate men, and give them his Spirit, and wholly change their natures, and put his image on their souls, and yet, that either *they themselves*, or the *devil*, should be allowed to destroy and undo this glorious work, and wholly raze and blot out that image of his, which was engraven by his Spirit on their hearts!

7. If God, by an act of astonishing grace, *justifies* us when *ungodly*; if he also takes us out of the *devil's* family by *adoption*, and gives us the Spirit and temper of sons, whereby we are disposed and enabled to cry, *Abba, Father*, and to render a filial and dutiful obedience: Can we suppose him so capricious (with reverence be it spoken!) as to change his own free acts; recall his gifts and favours; condemn us again and cast us back to the family of the devil, from which he had but just taken us by a miracle of mercy; especially when we are told that *his gifts and calling are without repentance**.

8. If the doctrine of our *mystical union with Christ*, through faith and the indwelling influences of the

* Psal. lxxxix. 28,—34. Rom. viii. 32,—39.

Spirit, be true; the perseverance of the saints in holiness, must follow of consequence: For, can we suppose that the mystical body of Christ can be mangled or dismembered? That his members may be cut off and made members of the devil? Or that our bodies may be one day *temples of the holy Ghost*, and the next *synagogues of Satan*.

9. Is it not something very shocking and absurd to reason, to suppose, that the states of men GOD-ward should be liable to hourly change; one hour justified persons, the next under sentence of condemnation; one hour holy saints, the next profane reprobates; one hour favourites of heaven, the next confederates with hell: The hour before death in a state of salvation, angels ready to guard and convey them to bliss; an hour hence, the prey of devils, and conveyed by them to everlasting torments!

10. WE do not say that the saints are infallible by any power of standing in themselves; or that divine grace is a thing, which, in its own nature cannot be lost. We believe, that if believers were left to themselves, they would fall from grace every hour. But we found this doctrine wholly on the power and promise of God; firmly believing, on the authority of his infallible word, "That his gifts and calling are without repentance; and that all who are begotten again to a lively hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens for them, SHALL BE KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD, THROUGH FAITH, UNTO SALVATION, ready to be revealed in the last times*."

11. FOR the clear and superabundant scripture evi-

N

* 1 Pet. i. 3,--6.

dence of this doctrine, read with attention the scriptures referred to below in the margin*.

12. THE scripture instances or examples alledged against this doctrine, are either, (1.) Of *hypocritical professors*, or *mere temporary believers*, falling from an outward profession of religion, which we believe to be a very possible and common case. Or, (2.) Of the *casual* and *temporary* defections and falls of true saints, which we readily grant to be too frequent a case. Or, (3.) Of *conditional threatenings* made to true saints, as a means of, and excitement to their perseverance. And all these scripture instances which are commonly objected to this doctrine, may, without straining them, be reduced to one or other of these classes.

13. THE principal objections alledged against this doctrine, from the nature and tendency of it, is, (1.) That it ministers to carnal confidence and security, and tends to hinder that watchfulness and circumspection, that holy fear and trembling with which it becomes such guilty, imperfect creatures as we are, to work out our salvation: But, the very best of men, can have no ground of confidence, save in the strength and promise of GOD. We know also, that if we live not holily, watchfully and circumspectly, we have no true grace. These are the only certain and infallible signs and marks of true grace, and where these are wanting, it would be the most irrational and absurd presumption, to be confident of persevering in a grace which we have not. (2.) It is objected, that this doctrine renders admonitions and reproofs, vain and needless. But these are the very appointed means of our standing, and to prevent our apostacy and ruin. We can have

* John x. 27,--29. —vi. 39, 40. —xvii. 11. 1 John ii. 19. —iii. 9. Eph. i. 13, 14. 2 Tim. ii. 19. —iv. 18. Matth. xxiv. 24. Rom. xi. 29. Isa. xlii. 3. —liii. 11, 12. Phil. i. 6. Heb. vi. 17, 18. Jude i. Psal. xxii. 30. Isa. liv. 10. Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. Job. xvii. 9.

no certainty of perseverance, but what arises from our certainty of the truth of grace, and this can be only ascertained by a ready and cheerful compliance with every gospel motive to universal holiness.

14. FEW Christians *can* or *ought* to take any comfort from the application of this doctrine to themselves. None have any right to do so, but such as have the clearest and most satisfying evidences of the truth of grace in themselves. And how few real Christians, comparatively speaking, have actually attained to this satisfying evidence of the truth of grace, from which they may take the comfort of the doctrine of perseverance?

15. LET it therefore be our first and principal care, to have true grace; let it be our next to know that we have it, to make our calling and election sure and certain to ourselves; and then let us freely rejoice in the immutability of the divine love;—that his gifts and calling are without repentance; that where he has once begun a good work, he will carry it on to the day of Christ Jesus, and that neither earth nor hell, shall be able to pluck us out of his hand, or out of his Father's hand. Amen.



ESSAY XV.

Of PEACE of CONSCIENCE.

1. CONSCIENCE is a comparing of our moral actions with their rule, and a practical judging of them by this rule; the result of which is, that we either *acquit* or *condemn* ourselves, according to this

evidence. When we acquit ourselves upon this practical judgment, then have we *peace of conscience*.

2. PEACE of conscience is the *fruit and effect* of *sanctification*: For, it is impossible that an unsanctified, impenitent, graceless person, can, upon true evidence, acquit himself at the bar of his own conscience; or, in other words, enjoy true peace of conscience.

3. IN order to true peace of conscience, it is not enough that the matter of our actions be conformable to the law of God: We must also be conscious that they are done from *right motives* and for *right ends*; in obedience to the authority of God, with a view to his glory and the good of our fellow creatures, or for our own spiritual benefit.

4. IT is one thing to be able to acquit ourselves of *some particular crime* falsely laid to our charge by men, which a very wicked person may be able to do; and quite another thing to be able to acquit ourselves, in our *general conduct*, in the sight of God. In order to *this peace*, we must labour to maintain the testimony of a good conscience, both *towards God* and *towards men*; or, as the Apostle elsewhere expresses it, we must *have lived in all good conscience*†.

5. A GOOD, quiet and peaceable conscience is one of the greatest blessings upon earth; one of the richest and most invaluable privileges of the sanctified; can be only obtained in the way of circumspect holiness, and should be pursued with the utmost assiduity by every Christian. Both the nature of it, and an earnest resolution to pursue it, are well expressed in these words of Job: *My heart shall not reproach me, so long as I live*†.

6. Two things are particularly necessary to peace of conscience: *First*, That *our sins are pardoned*, through

† Acts xxiii. 1. — xxiv. 16.

† Job xxvii. 6. Read also, 1 John iii. 19, -- 21. 1 Tim. i. 5.
1 Pet. iii. 19. 1 Tim. iii. 9.

faith in the Redeemer's blood : For, where guilt remains, there can be no ground for peace, and where a sense of guilt remains, no peace can actually take place*. *Secondly, A holy life :* For, *there is no peace, saith my GOD, to the wicked* †.

7. THE pure and ravishing pleasures, the solid joys and extatic delights of a peaceable conscience, are beautifully expressed by the Apostle ‡ ; “ For this is
“ our rejoicing, even the testimony of our conscience,
“ that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with flesh-
“ ly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had
“ our conversation in the world.” And again ¶ ;
“ Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace
“ with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and re-
“ joice in hope of the glory of God. We glory in
“ tribulations also ; knowing that tribulation worketh
“ patience ; and patience, experience ; and experi-
“ ence, hope ; and hope maketh not ashamed, be-
“ cause the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts
“ by the holy Ghost, which is given unto us.”

8. THE horrors of an evil, guilty, condemning conscience are, beyond compare, the most shocking miseries of this life ; and too certain preludes of that worm which dieth not, and that fire which is not quenched. Conscience is a lion, which will one day or other, rise up and tear to pieces, with resistless fury, the impenitent sinner. We have some instructive and alarming instances of these horrors of a guilty and awakened conscience, in the cases of *Cain, Judas* and *Francis Spira*.

9. THE dangerous and destructive counterfeit of peace of conscience, is security, or a false and ill-grounded peace of mind, in a wilful course of sin. This arises either

* Heb. ix. 11,—14.—x. 22.

† Isa. lvii. 21.

‡ 2 Cor. i. 12.

¶ Rom. v. 1,—4.

from false and unworthy notions of God's perfections, or from a long custom of sinning against light, whereby the conscience becomes as it were *seared* and *past feeling**: But a piercing light will, one day or other, discover this cheat to the sinner, and fill his soul with an anguish which he shall neither be able to support nor divert.

10. LET us labour to obtain an *enlightened, well informed* conscience, that we may neither, on the one hand, become the dupes of superstitious fears, groundless panics, and imaginary terrors, for actions in which there is really no guilt; nor, on the other, like Saint Paul, bring guilt upon ourselves, by erring *ignorantly* through unbelief †.

11. LET us pray and labour for a *tender, sensible, faithful* conscience; lest we be given over to the dreadful soul-destroying judgments of *blindness of mind* and *hardness of heart*.

* Eph. iv. 18, 19.

† 1 Tim. i. 13.



E S S A Y XVI.

Of Joy in the HOLY GHOST.

1. **J**OY in the holy Ghost, is a joy proceeding not merely from the testimony of a good conscience; but also from the cheering influences of the holy Spirit, the comforter, bearing witness with the comfortable testimony of our own spirits, shining upon the work of grace in our souls, and making it visible to ourselves; the consequence of which is, that we are filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

2. IT is a direct fruit of the Spirit, not only as *sanctifying*, but as *comforting**: It is the love of GOD shed abroad in our hearts, by the holy Ghost which is given unto us †.

3. THIS also is a privilege only of the *sanctified*: For, although the holy GHOST operates on the hearts of the wicked, as a *renewer* and *sanctifier*; yet he visits none as a *comforter*, shedding abroad the love of GOD in their hearts, except such as are in a state of *pardon* and *reconciliation* with GOD, and as are *actually holy*.

4. IF we would experience and enjoy within us, that spiritual kingdom of GOD, which consists in *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost* ‡; we must, by a *virtuous, watchful* and *circumspect* life, have our souls always prepared and adorned, as fit temples for the residence of the holy Ghost: For, this joy does not seem to be essential to a sanctified state; but seems rather to depend much on the manner in which we improve our talents, and entertain and cherish the motions and operations of the holy Spirit on our minds. It may be also, in many cases, a peculiar and sovereign favour conferred by GOD on some believers, who may best improve it to his glory, and the comfort and edification of others, or certain important occasions and emergencies.

5. As, therefore, we would expect this divine privilege, and taste this pure and heavenly joy, let us be solicitously watchful over every movement of our hearts and affections, and labour after the utmost purity of soul.

6. MANY poor Christians are so far from enjoying these *luxuries of religion*, that through some peculiar infelicity of constitution or external circumstances, or from some other cause known only to GOD, they walk

* Gal. v. 22.

† Rom. v. 4.

‡ Rom. xiv. 17.

continually in darkness and see no light: Let not such, however, be over much distressed, provided they are but enabled to *trust in the LORD, and stay themselves upon their GOD**.

* Isa. l. 10.



E S S A Y XVII.

Whether CHRISTIANS may be fully assured of GOD's eternal LOVE, in this LIFE?

1. **B**Y a full assurance of GOD's love, we mean
 * Such a firm and well-grounded persuasion
 ' of his love to us, of the truth of grace in us, and of
 ' the certainty of our future glory and happiness, as
 ' excludes all doubts and fears, and as affords just
 ' ground of joy and triumph.' The Apostle terms
 it, *The full assurance of hope**.

2. WE do not suppose that *every believer* attains to this privilege; for, we do not suppose that assurance is of the essence of faith. To believe and trust in Christ, is *one thing*, and to be persuaded and assured that we do believe and trust in him, agreeable to the gospel command is *another* and a very different thing: The *first* is a *direct*, the *second* a reflex act of faith: By the *first* we are actually in the way of salvation; by the *second* we know and are comfortably assured that we are so; and the *first* may be and often is, without the second †.

* Heb. vi. 11.

† Isa. l. 10.

3. THIS comfortable assurance of GOD's eternal love is not, in its own nature *permanent*; but may be, and often is *lost for a time*, either through falls and miscarriages, or an unwatchful and uncircumspect life, or for other reasons and purposes known only to GOD. Nay, it may be doubted, whether any christian ever enjoyed this privilege uninterruptedly for many years, or even months together. Nor indeed is it necessary, as it is not essential to salvation. It is necessary to our salvation, that we should always trust in GOD; but it is not equally necessary, that we should always know that we do so.

4. GOD may have wise and gracious reasons for withholding this comfortable assurance wholly from some Christians, and for interrupting it often in others; namely, to humble and preserve them from spiritual pride; to chastise them for carelessness and unwatchfulness, and to exercise them in the graces of godly sorrow, repentance, patience, dependance, and a painful diligence in the work of religion.

5. CHRISTIANS may also forfeit this comfortable assurance, by their miscarriages and indiscretions; by grieving the holy Spirit and resisting his motions and impulses, and by neglecting the duties of meditation, self-examination, prayer, and the other instrumental ordinances of GOD's appointment.

6. BUT this assurance is a privilege certainly *attainable* by Christians, because it has been *actually attained* by numbers of GOD's people. It appears that *Job**, *David*†, *St. Paul* and all the other Apostles had this comfortable assurance‡.

7. IT was one principal design of writing the scriptures, that we might come to this comfortable assur-



* Job xix. 23,--27.

† 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. and his psalms passim.

‡ 2 Tim. i. 12. —iv. 7, 8. 2 Cor. iv. 17. —v. 1, 6. 7, 8. Phil. i. 19,--23. 1 John iii. 2, 3, &c.

ance, and we are repeatedly exhorted and commanded to seek for it and obtain it, which proves that it is attainable*.

8. THERE are numberless conditional promises of salvation laid down in scripture, the conditions whereof, if we can be persuaded that we have been enabled to fulfil them, we may be equally assured of *eternal life*, and that we are in a *state of salvation*. For instance; *he that believeth, repenteth, is converted and born of God shall be saved*. "This is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his son: He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." If, therefore, I have obtained a rational assurance, that I have *believed*, or *received the Son of God by faith*; that I have *repented*, and am *truly regenerated and born again of the Spirit*, I am equally assured of *eternal life*.

9. THE scriptures abound with marks and characters of *true believers and real converts*. *Ex. g.* "This is the love of God, that ye keep his commandments. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, &c. and they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with its lusts. There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. To be spiritually minded is life and peace. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Every man, who hath this hope in himself, purifyeth himself, as God is pure, &c." Now, if we are rationally and upon good grounds persuaded that we have these marks and characters, we may be equally assured of *spiritual life in possession, and eternal life in reversion*.

* John xx. 31. 1 John i. 4.—v. 13. 2. Cor. xiii. 5. Gal. vi. 3, 4, &c.

10. THE witness of the Spirit may also concur with and shine upon this evidence, and give us an irresistible persuasion, that this is indeed our happy case*.

11. THE following things seem necessary to this assurance: (1.) There must be *promises* of life and salvation revealed, as *objects* of our faith.—(2.) There must be *marks* and *characters* revealed, as a *rule* whereby we may examine and try ourselves, and know our state.—(3.) These marks and evidences of grace must be *discovered*, in an ordinary way, by frequent, diligent, and impartial *self-examination*, which is the only rational expedient on our part to come at *self-knowledge*.—(4.) It is necessary, that we should *discern in ourselves* these marks and evidences, to which the promises of salvation are made: And, (5.) In order to remove all doubt and uncertainty, it seems necessary, in most cases, that the Spirit should shine upon his own work, and give his *concurring testimony*; and for this we should earnestly pray, while we examine.

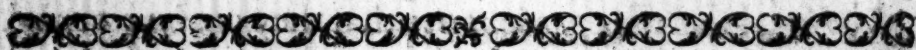
12. THERE IS AN *extraordinary witness of the Spirit*, which seems distinct from this, and which is much more rare and uncommon; wherein, without any self-examination, reflection or reasoning, the Spirit of God *immediately shines on the soul*, with such an irresistible and overpowering light, and with such sensible first-fruits of heavenly glory, as puts the persons thus highly favoured, infinitely above all doubt of the safety of their state. This often happens to *eminently holy men*, upon the near approach of death.

13. THE very lowest degree of this assurance is not to be expected without *true faith*, and a conscientious regard to God's commandments, accompanied with self-examination, and careful serious reflections on our temper, frame and actions, compared with the word of God.

* Rom. v. 1,--5.—viii. 15,--17.

14. It is the duty of every Christian, to labour to obtain this comfortable assurance of the safety and happiness of his state, for the following reasons: (1.) Without it he can have no rational hope, or joy in the holy Ghost. (2.) He cannot, with truth and sincerity, bear an honourable testimony to religion, or encourage and comfort others from his own experience. (3.) He cannot praise God or rejoice in him, as he ought; nor be so chearful in his service, or so exemplary in his own life, as he otherwise might. (4.) His death cannot be honorable to christianity, nor edifying to saints or sinners; as he must go down to the grave, in a state of doubt and hesitancy.

15. To obtain this comfortable assurance, is, for ordinary, a work which requires much labour, diligence and perseverance; but when obtained, it will abundantly recompence the labour of a whole lifetime.



ESSAY XVIII.

The IMMORTALITY of the SOUL.

1. **T**HE doctrine of the soul's immortality is of great importance in religion: For, if the soul perished with the body, *self-denial*, *mortification*, and *extreme sufferings* in the cause of virtue, would be *absurd*;—and the best Christians would, as the Apostle suggests, be of all men the most miserable.

2. By the souls being *immortal*, we do not mean that it is impossible for him who made it to destroy it; or that it is, in its own nature, immortal, independently on God; but that it doth not perish or die with,

or like the body, nor can be destroyed by any creature; but is appointed by God for an endless existence, and fitted and qualified for this deathless existence in its own nature.

3. REASON does not assure us, that *thought* and *consciousness* are *inseparable* and *essential* properties of human souls: For ought we know, they may be and exist without continued thought, consciousness and reflection, though the contrary opinion is highly probable, and seems to be countenanced by scripture.

4. WE know of but two kinds of substances in the universe, *matter* and *spirit*. And these we conceive of as entirely different and distinct from one another. God, we are sure, is a *pure spirit*; *immaterial*, *without body* or *bodily parts*; But we are not equally certain that created spirits, either *angels* or *human souls*, are spirits of the same nature with God, or *wholly immaterial*. Though their being called *spirits*, and being said to be made after the image of God, and to be *his off-spring*, is a *strong presumption* that they are *immaterial*.

5. IF it could be certainly proved that our souls are wholly immaterial, as God is, it would be a strong argument in favor of their immortality: Because, it would hence follow, that they are *incapable of dissolution*; that they could not perish with the body, and that none but God could destroy them. But we have abundant arguments to prove the *soul's immortality*, laying aside the consideration of its being *immaterial*.

6. THERE is much the same reason to believe the *spirits of brutes* to be *immaterial*, as the *souls of men*. Both are called *spirits* in the scripture; though it is said, that the one *goeth upward* at death, and the other *downwards*. And it is as difficult to conceive how a *merely material* substance should *perceive*, *reason*, *remember*, *compare*, *love* and *hate* in a *beast*, more than in a *man*. Yet there are not the same reasons to believe the immortality of the spirits of beasts, as of the souls of men.

7. THE strongest and most conclusive arguments for the *immortality of human souls*, are of a *moral nature*, and do not arise from their being *immaterial*: For, although we know our bodies to be material, yet we have sufficient reason to believe, that they shall be raised from the dead, and rendered immortal in a future state. And if we have reason to believe this of our mortal bodies, why may we not believe the same of our souls, even supposing them to be material.

8. THERE is a great apparent resemblance between men and brutes in many respects, both *living* and *dying*. They seem to have much the same natural perceptions of pleasure and pain. All the brute creation seem to have some portion of reason, fore-thought, contrivance and memory. So that it is hard to conceive an essential difference between the souls of men and the spirits of beasts; only, that the former appear to be a more perfect kind of spirits. Yet there are many *great* and *essential* differences between men and beasts, which lay a foundation for believing the souls of men to be *immortal*, whereas the spirits of beasts may be *mortal* and *perishable* at their death.

9. THE souls of men have plainly a *capacity for virtue and religion*. It is evident that they have a *conscience*, a *moral sense* and *feeling*, a *divine law* written upon them; that they have hopes and fears, relating to invisible powers, and a future and invisible state. They have naturally *hope* and *joy*, when they are conscious of having acted up to the moral law of their nature; and *fears* and *forebodings* of punishment, when they grossly violate the laws of their own minds. In other words; it appears, that they are *moral agents*, *accountable creatures*, under law to God; and that they know they are responsible to him for their moral actions. But there is not the least evidence or appearance of this among the brute creation. Now if God has implanted *this law, this moral sense, these hopes and fears*

in human souls, as the law of their nature ; is it to be thought, that they are vain and false, and have no real objects ?

10. THE spirits of brutes do not seem capable of improvement: Whatever they *know* and *do* seems to be by *instinct*. The bird builds her nest as ingeniously the *first year*, without any instruction, as she does after the experience of *ten years* ; and knows her food, her enemies and resources as well. But the soul of man is capable of daily improvement, not only in *virtue*, but in the *knowledge of arts and sciences*. Is it not likely then, that *human souls* are made for *noble ends*, and for *higher enjoyments*, even for an *immortal, ever improving duration* ?

11. THE generality of men of all nations, even the most ignorant and barbarous, have believed the immortality of the soul, and this universal belief, must be supposed founded on *some obvious principles*, level to the capacity of all, which is a strong presumption that it is *true and founded in nature*.

12. MEN in general have a *strong desire*, and a fond hope of immortality ; and the more virtuous and holy they are, the more earnest is this hope and desire of immortality : But would a *good God* provide gratifications for all the natural desires of the lowest order of creatures, and leave this noblest appetite in man ungratified ?---or would he inspire the *holiest* and *best of men* with *pantings, breathings* and *earnest longings*, which are *vain, imaginary* and *delusive* ?

13. IT seems not consistent with the divine goodness to form so excellent a creature as man, for so short a *duration* and such *low employments*, as are to be met with in this life. Is it reasonable to imagine, that the human soul, by the time its noble faculties just begin to be cultivated and fitted for noble pleasures and enjoyments, should be extinguished and cut off for ever ?

14. GOOD men desire nothing so much as to enjoy God more perfectly than they can in their life; and the more they love God, the more eager and unsatisfied is this desire in their souls. Nay, this desire, is the fruit of God's grace in them, and of his own planting. But if the human soul is not immortal, the best of men, can never obtain their *noblest desire*, and the *highest enjoyment* and *happiness* of which their nature is capable.

15. IF the soul were mortal, a desperate villain might deprive the most virtuous man of *his being*, and of all the future rewards of his virtue: But is it consistent with the justice and goodness of God, that this should be in the power of a bad man?

16. IF God is a just governor of his rational creatures, the *virtuous must* and *will* be rewarded according to their works, and the *wicked* punished according to theirs: But we are sure this does not always happen in the present life; therefore, there must be a *future state* of retribution, and consequently human souls are immortal.

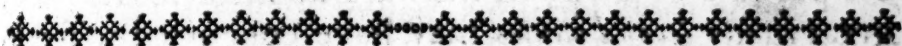
17. OUR Lord Jesus Christ has put this doctrine beyond all doubt, having brought life and immortality to light by his gospel. The whole of his religion; all his threatnings and promises, his rewards and punishments, go upon this supposition, and all his discourses and parables are full of it.

18. CHRIST's raising the dead bodies of many, and rising himself from the dead; also, the appearance of *Moses* and *Elias* to the disciples on the *mount of transfiguration*, were so many ocular demonstrations of the immortality of the soul, and that its existence depends not on the life of the body.

19. It is no objection to this important doctrine, that the faculties of the souls of *aged* or *sick persons*, are *impaired* and *infeebled* by the diseases and decays of the body; seeing the soul must exert its faculties by

and *through* the bodily organs. On the contrary also, the souls of some men are uncommonly active and vigorous when their bodies are in the deepest decays, and just at the point of death.

20. If our souls are indeed immortal, and must live for ever happy or miserable, is there any care or concern in this life a thousandth part so important to man, as to provide for the future happiness of his immortal soul?



E S S A Y XIX.

Of DEATH.

1. **T**HOUGH we can hardly conceive of the *natural immortality* of a body composed of *flesh* and *blood*; yet God could doubtless have made our bodies immortal, if he had so pleased. And had we continued in a state of innocence, there is no doubt but that we would have been immortal; for this seems implied in the promise of the covenant of works.

2. WHETHER this reward and privilege of innocent man, would have been an immortality on earth or in heaven, is no where plainly revealed.

3. **T**HOUGH man was *naturally mortal*; yet God could have preserved him from death, by the salubrity of the air and water, the wholesome, restorative and medicinal quality of the fruits of the earth, and that composure and equability of the passions and affections, resulting from the innocency and perfection of the soul.

4. SOME have supposed, that the *tree of life*, from which man was excluded by sin, had, in its fruit, the

Of DEATH.

preternatural quality of preserving man immortal, so long as he had access to eat it: Others, that it was a *sacramental pledge* of his immortality so long as he continued in a state of innocence.

5. HOWEVER these things may be, yet we are assured both from scripture and experience, that *fallen, sinful man*, is *mortal*; that death is the *wages* and *consequent* of *sin* in all the race; and that death hath passed upon *all*, because *all have sinned**.

6. As death is the *wages of sin*, and by the unalterable purpose of GOD, all men are doomed to die; so a great many *second causes* may have concurred to secure the accomplishment of this purpose; as the curse of the earth, poisoning its fruits with the seeds of death; the baneful influences of the accursed air upon our lungs and juices; the intemperature of the seasons, and the quick successions from wet to dry, and from extreme heat to extreme cold; the exorbitancy and irregularity of our passions and appetites through sin; the sickly and enfeebled constitutions of our forefathers, and the like.

7. WITH regard to beasts, we suppose death to put a period to their pains, pleasures and very beings. But, as it is attended with some degree of pain, and deprives these creatures of being, and many pleasurable enjoyments, religion and even humanity should restrain us from giving them unnecessary pain, and much more from taking away their lives, where necessity, or the law of self-preservation, does not require it.

8. WITH regard to man, *death* in itself considered, or the *mere separation of soul and body*, ought not to be greatly dreaded, as probably the pain of it is much smaller than we imagine: But what renders death peculiarly important and formidable to man, is its *awful consequences*. "It is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgment."

* Gen. ii. 17. Rom. v. 12. Job xxi. 23. Heb. ix. 27.

9. "THE sting of death is sin." A consciousness of guilt, of exposedness to an impartial judgment, eternal banishment from God, and the positive inflictions of his wrath, render death extremely formidable to the *wicked*, as it must be to *such*, the period of all their pleasurable enjoyments, and the commencement of eternal misery.

10. EVEN nature, in good men, has an abhorrence of death, in itself considered, as we may learn from the Apostle himself*; because, say some, death is *unnatural*, being no part of the original constitution, but an *adventitious* consequent upon sin, and part of the punishment of it. But many other reasons may be assigned for this, such as the natural fear of the pain of dying, our unacquaintedness with the separate state and invisible world, and remaining doubts of their unpreparedness, with many. Besides, the soul and body, who have been long such close and intimate companions, must naturally have a reluctance to part from each other, though but for a season.

11. IT is the peculiar privilege of the *righteous*, that death will redound to their unspeakable advantage. —*Death is theirs*, as the Apostle emphatically expresses it †. *To them to die, is gain ‡*.

(1.) THE sting of death is taken away, in their justification: For, after rational evidence, that a person is pardoned, and restored to the favour of God, there is no more rational ground for the *fear of death*; as that *sense of guilt* and *fear of punishment* which are the sting of death are taken away, and such a person has ground for that triumphant exultation; "O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory§!"

* 2 Cor. v. 2.

† 1 Cor. iii. 22.

‡ Phil. i. 20.

§ 1 Cor. xv.

(2.) DEATH changes its nature to the righteous, and, of an *enemy* becomes a *friend*. The *king of terrors* is changed into a *messenger of divine love*: As, *first*, It frees them from all misery, and from the remainder of indwelling corruption. It ends the mortal strife and conflict, and gives them a complete victory and triumph over every enemy. *Secondly*, It fits and qualifies them for farther and higher communion with Christ in glory. When they are *absent from the body*, they are *present with the Lord*; see him face to face, and enjoy him perfectly without a *medium*. It enlarges and qualifies the soul for more perfect communion with, and the more perfect enjoyment of God, *Christ, angels and blessed spirits*. And, as *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven*, it prepares the body for putting on a spiritual and immortal form without which it could not be fitted for heaven.

12. THE change of those who shall be alive at the resurrection and second coming of Christ, will be equivalent to death; There appearing no reason why such should be privileged above their fellow creatures.

13. THE translation of *Enoch* and *Elijah*, are the only two exceptions from the universal mortality of the human kind; and perhaps were intended as demonstrative proofs of an unseen world.

14. THOUGH death will be certain gain to the righteous; yet a longer continuance in the present life may be beneficial to many of them, and answer great and important purposes in the scheme of providence: Wherefore, an absolute and impatient desire of death, or peremptory prayers for it, are not commendable in good men; but all lawful means to preserve and prolong life ought to be used by them*.

INFERENCES. 1st, How ought a sense of universal mortality to *humble the pride of man*; and especially that arising from *birth, honour, power, wealth, riches*

* Philip. i. 21,---26.

and *nobility*? We have surely no reason to be vain or proud of any thing, of which death can rob us.

2. How *vain* and *ridiculous*, yea, and *unhappy* a thing would man be, if he were wholly under the dominion of death, and had no claim to immortality?

3. FROM the consideration of death, the greatest of all natural evils, and from its *universality*, we may infer the great evil of sin, from which it took its rise.

4. FROM the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the importance of it, as a state of probation for eternity, we should learn the importance of improving our time, and the great guilt and folly of lavishing and squandering it in foolish and vain, and much more in sinful amusements and pleasures†.

5. If death be so important in its consequences, how dreadful a thing is murder? and how cautious and circumspect ought judges and juries to be in matters of life and death?

6. How desperately mad is the wretch who is accessory to his own death, by which, he not only deprives himself and the world of all the benefits and advantages of his life, but plunges into an awful eternity, under all the irremissible guilt of suicide.

† Psal. xc. 12. — xxxix. 4. 5.

E S S A Y XX.

The RESURRECTION of the DEAD.

1. **T**HIS is a doctrine of *pure revelation*, seeing there is no principle or appearance in nature, from whence it can be rationally inferred.

2. THE instance of a grain of corn dying in the earth before it springs, and like instances, are good *illustrations* of the doctrine already revealed, and shew that the thing is neither *impossible* nor *absurd*; but cannot prove it.

3. **T**HOUGH it appears from many passages of the Old Testament scriptures, that this doctrine was believed by the Old Testament saints*; yet the *full, clear and circumstantial* revelation of it was reserved to be brought to light by the gospel. Christ raised three dead bodies in the course of his ministry, and raised himself. He terms himself, *the resurrection and the life*†; and declares, that he is commissioned by God to raise up all his people at the last day‡. See this doctrine established from the resurrection of Christ, and beautifully explained, 1 Cor. xv.

4. THE bodies both of the *righteous* and the *wicked* shall be raised¶: For, as the body has been a partner with the soul in this state of probation, it seems equitable, that it should share with it in a state of retribution.

* See 1 Sam. ii. 6. 2 Kings iv. 35. — xiii. 21. — xvii. 21, 22. Psal. xvi. 10. Isa. xxv. 8. Hos. xiii. 14. Compare 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55. Luke xx. 37, 38. Compare Exod. iii. 6. Job xix. 25, — 27. Dan. xii. 2. Heb. xi.

† John xi.

‡ John vi. 39, 49.

¶ Matth. xxv. 31, &c. Rev. xx. 12, 13. Matth. x. 28. Luke xii. 25.

5. THE resurrection body will be the *same in substance* with that which died, but will have *far different qualities*, suited to the state and place of retribution: For, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven; neither is it conceivable that they should long endure the torments of hell, unconsumed, without a perpetual miracle. The bodies of the saints will be raised *spiritual, incorruptible and glorious*, like the glorified body of Christ; and probably those of the wicked, *spiritual and incorruptible*, but *hideous and deformed*.

6. THE objections raised against the resurrection of the *same body*, are so futile, when we consider the power and wisdom of God, and the true nature of things, as not to deserve a serious answer.

7. THE bodies of those who shall be found alive on the earth at the last day, shall be instantaneously changed; in which change there will be the nature and essence both of a death, and a resurrection.



E S S A Y XXI.

Of a FUTURE JUDGMENT.

1. **I**T is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgment, Heb. ix. 27.

2. MANY of the arguments for the immortality of the soul, equally prove a judgment to come; such as the *moral agency and accountableness* of man; the operations of his conscience and moral sense; his unaccountable *hopes and fears* respecting an invisible power and a future state; the unequal distribution of rewards

and punishments according to men's moral characters in this present state, and the like.

3. It is remarkable also, that a belief of a judgment to come, and a future state of rewards and punishments, according to men's present behaviour, has been as *universal*, as the belief of the soul's immortality; and is indeed grounded on the same general principles.

4. THE holy scriptures *fully, clearly, and circumstantially* establish and teach this doctrine*.

5. GOD will judge the world by *Jesus Christ*, by whom he *made* and *governs* it, and by whom he has redeemed it. There is a great and evident propriety in this, from many reasons too tedious here to mention. This also tends powerfully to prove the *real divinity* and *infinite perfection* of our Redeemer†.

6. CHRIST at the day of judgment, will descend from heaven, in visible pomp and splendour inexpressible; clothed with his own glory, his Father's glory, and attended with all the shining retinue of heaven;—will seat himself on a glorious white throne in the lower heavens, and having summoned before him, the whole rational creation, *angels, men, and devils*, will judge and sentence them according to their respective works and characters‡.

7. THE important consequence of this judgment is, that the righteous will immediately enter into a state of *endless happiness*, and the wicked into a state of *endless misery*, in consequence of the public sentence then passed upon them by the judge||.

* See Jude 14. and Eccles. xii. 14. Matth. xxv. Rev. xii. and xxii. &c.

† Acts xvii. 31. 2 Cor. v. 10. &c.

‡ Luke ix. 26. Matth. xxv. 31. 1 Thes. iv. 16. 2 Thes. i. 7.—10. 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude 6, 14, 15. Rev. xix. 11, 14. —xxii. 12. 2 Cor. v. 10.

|| Matth. xxv. 34, 41, 46.

8. As we hear of but *one judgment*; it does not appear that the souls of men, are immediately judged at their departure from the body; although it is *certain* they are then made to *know* and *expect* their final doom, and do enter immediately into some degree of happiness or misery, according to their respective characters*.

* Luke vi. 21,—23 ———xxiii. 43. Rev. vi. 9, 10.



ESSAY XXII.

HEAVEN; or the FUTURE STATE of the BLESSED.

1. **W**E have already supposed, that the souls of the righteous, during the whole intermediate state, from the article of death, to the day of judgment, are in a *place* and *state* of blessedness,—called in scripture *Paradise*; *Abraham's bosom*, *heaven*, and the like; though it is uncertain, whether this be the same place and state into which they will enter after the final judgment.

2. **THOUGH** the sight of their descending Redeemer, and their being placed on his right hand before the judgment seat, will fill the righteous with inexpressible joy; yet the sentence passed on them after judgment, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom, &c."---may be properly deemed the *first part* of their *public triumph*, and of the *honour* conferred upon them before the assembled world: This being the *first declaration* of their title to the eternal joys of their Lord, in consequence of their judgment and acquittance.

3. **THEY** will then go away with Christ and the holy

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angels into *life eternal*, where they will ever be with each other, and with their dearest Lord*.

4. WE must consider heaven both as a *place* and a *state* of blessedness; but *where* this place or *what* this state precisely is, we are not at present permitted to know.

5. As Christ has, and the saints will have *glorious bodies*, there must needs be a *local heaven*, or *some place* where these bodies will *be* and *reside*. But whether the whole universe may not be turned into a heaven to them; or whether any particular part of it may be appropriated for their peculiar residence, is what we cannot certainly tell. True, the heaven of the saints is termed a *city*, the *New Jerusalem*, *mansions* in God's *house*, *sure habitations*, and the like; but for all we know, these may be only *figurative expressions*. God may create a heaven around his saints wherever they are, even in hell; and they may have intimate communion with each other, from the most distant parts of the universe. The *angels* always behold the face of God in heaven, and yet they are represented as ministering to the saints on earth. Wherever God graciously communicates himself to his rational creatures, there is heaven: and, as God is immense and infinite, his creatures can no where be out of his immediate presence.

6. HEAVEN, wherever it is, must be a *glorious place* adorned with every thing which can gratify and delight the refined and heavenly senses of glorified and spiritualized bodies; and as, in our perfect glorious state, we may have a great many *more* and *different* senses and *capacities*, than what we have at present, and all these may have their proper and adapted gratifications; therefore, it is impossible for us to conceive at present any thing of the glory and happiness of that place, which *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard*, &c.†.

* Matth. xxv. 46.

† 1 Cor. ii. 9.

7. BUT we can at present conceive something of the *heavenly state*, as a state of *perfect holiness*, exempt from all sin and misery ; and indeed, good men enjoy something of heaven in this sense of the word, or have some foretastes or prelibations of it in their souls, in this life.

8. HEAVEN is a state of *improved knowledge* and *perfect holiness*. The glorified saints do *see* and *know* God *intuitively*, in his own nature, and in a spiritual manner, as one spirit may be supposed to see and know another. They also have a clear discernment of the wisdom and contrivance of his works, and of the holiness, justice and equity of his ways and providences ; which is a kind and degree of knowledge we cannot attain to in this life, and which must afford inexpressible happiness to the mind, by delightfully gratifying its noblest powers. The righteous in heaven are also *altogether holy* ; have no propensity to sin ; no struggles with corruption ; no conflict with temptation ; no remorse for guilt, nor any fear of displeasing God, or enduring his displeasure. They *clearly see* and *know* God, and therefore they perfectly *love* and *admire* him. They know the equity of his laws and the beauty of holiness, and therefore they cannot but delightfully obey him and work holiness, and can be in no danger of inclining to the hateful ways of sin. Besides, enjoying so glorious a reward of holiness, and seeing sin so dreadfully punished in the damned, they are everlastingly guarded against the love of sin in the most powerful manner imaginable.

9. As God is the perfection of beauty, and the source of all blessedness and comfort, so the highest part of our heavenly blessedness will consist in the *contemplation* and *enjoyment* of him. In *knowing him*, we shall *know all truth*, and in *enjoying him* we shall *enjoy all good and happiness* ; for there is neither *truth* nor *happiness* but *in and from him* ; so that he must ever be the *supreme good* and *chief portion* of our souls : Besides,

that the knowledge and enjoyment of God are *transforming* and *assimulating*; so that to *know* and *enjoy him*, is to *be like him*; and to *be like him* in our measure, is to be *as holy, happy and glorious*, as our nature will admit*.

10. THE presence and enjoyment of Christ and of the holy Ghost, will also be prime ingredients in our heavenly blessedness. Indeed, in enjoying *them*, we enjoy God†.

11. NOR need we scruple to suppose, that the sweet fellowship and communion of *angels* and *saints*, more especially those whom we have *known* and *loved* on earth, will be ingredients in our heavenly blessedness. “But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city
“of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to
“an innumerable company of angels; to the general
“assembly and church of the first-born, which are
“written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and
“to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus
“the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood
“of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of
“Abel‡.”

12. THE happiness of the righteous will be *eternal*.

13. IT shall also, in all probability, be *ever improving*, as they grow in knowledge and holiness.

14. IT is highly probable, that there will be different degrees of glory in heaven, according to the different degrees of holiness among God's children on earth||.

15. WE should now have our conversation in heaven, and be preparing for that blessed place and state: For, how sad a case will it be, if we are describing that blessedness which we shall never enjoy, nor even see, but at an unapproachable distance, as the rich man did *Lazarus*, through the impassable gulph.

* 1 John iii. 2.

† 1 Thess. iv. 17, 18. Phil. i. 23. 2 Cor. v. 5, —8.

‡ See Heb. xii. 22, &c.

|| 1 Cor. xy. 41, 42. Matth. xxv. 14.

E S S A Y XXIII.

Of HELL or the PLACE and STATE of the WICKED.

1. **A**LTHOUGH the wicked carry hell in their consciences from the moment of their death, and are probably doomed to herd among the devils, and to share in their present punishments; yet their rising from their graves in *terror* and *deformity*; their ranking themselves on the left hand of the judge, and more especially their receiving that awful sentence; “Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,” may be reckoned the beginning of their *hell*, or *eternal torments*†.

HELL is both a *place* and a *state*. The *place* or *locality* of hell cannot be doubted after the resurrection, as the bodies of the wicked must needs be in some place. Besides, the scriptures represent it as “a lake of fire and brimstone; a fire prepared for the devil and his angels,” and the like:—and *Dives* is represented as lifting up his eyes, being in torments; and an *impassable gulph* is said to be fixed between him and *Lazarus*. But whether the souls of the wicked are now, in their intermediate state, confined to any such place, is a question not easy or needful to be answered. Some think, that they and the devils are suffered to roam at large through the universe. Let it suffice us to know, that wherever they are, it is hell with them. They are under a painful sense of the divine displeasure, and have a dreadful expectation of the judgment, and of greater miseries yet to come.

3. THERE have been many vain speculations about the *place* and *nature* of hell’s torments. Some have

† Matth. xxv. 41, &c.

thought it absurd to suppose, that the positive torments of damned spirits, of the devil and his angels, should be excited by *material fire*. But if we consider, that it is our *spirits* which feel the pain of burning through our bodies, we shall not think it incredible, that God should excite the same idea of pain from fire in *pure spirits* without the intervention of bodies. However, fire may be only *figuratively* used, to signify the most intense pain and torments. And as for the *place* of the damned, it better becomes us to endeavor to shun it, than curiously to enquire *where* or *what* it is.

4. At the resurrection of the wicked, their souls being united to their bodies, they shall be judged; and that awful sentence being passed upon them, "Depart from me ye cursed, &c." they shall be dragged away by devils, and with them, shut up in the prison of hell; thus sharing in the punishment of those with whom they apostatized.

5. It appears from scripture, that the misery of the damned will be *properly eternal, everlasting fire*; a worm *that dieth not*, and a fire *that is not quenched*. It appears agreeable to reason also, that creatures who have despised and rejected *an everlasting heaven of blessedness*, should have *an everlasting hell of misery*; and that those who have slighted the glorious hope set before them, should inherit endless despair; which, indeed, upon the whole, was *their own choice and preference*.

6. As to the *state of hell*, or rather of *the damned*, it arises in a great measure from their own wicked and hellish dispositions, which cannot admit of happiness, but are naturally productive of misery. A wicked man is, and must be *a hell to himself*. He is *self-fitted* and *prepared to this destruction*; and he needs only to be out of the body, and out of a capacity of tasting God's goodness to be in *hell*, and to be equally a *devil*. So that

repentance of sin, and holiness, are in their own nature, necessary to deliver men from hell, and to qualify them for happiness.

7. THE chief ingredients in the miseries of the damned, are, (1.) Their being banished from the presence and enjoyment of GOD, the fountain of happiness :--- (2.) The society of *devils* and other damned spirits, who will be continually upbrading them, and exciting their hellish passions :--- (3.) A remembrance of the good things of this life which they have lost, and a sense of their desperate madness in rejecting that eternal blessedness which they might have enjoyed, for the meere trifles :--- (4.) Envy at the happiness of the blessed :--- (5.) A painful sense of GOD's wrath, and the infliction of positive torments from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power ;---and *finally*, despair of ever seeing an end of their misery---with, perhaps---a continual increase and aggravation of it, from their increasing wickedness and guilt.

8. If any thing can awaken our fears, surely it ought to be a dread of our falling into this place of torment*.

* Luke xii. 4, 5.



E S S A Y XXIV.

*What, as CHRISTIANS, we ought to do more than others,
from Matth. v. 47.*

THE *others* mentioned here, are *publicans* and *sinners*, and imply all the *wicked* and *profane*, and all *hypocrites* and formal, insincere professors of religion : And it is plainly supposed, that the true and sincere

disciples of Christ, who hope for salvation through faith in him and obedience to his gospel, must do much more, and go much farther in the duties of religion and sound morality, than these. The following may serve as a few illustrations of this observation.

1. OTHERS, even *publicans* and *sinners*, may and do love those that love them : But we must love and wish well to our enemies ; pray for them and do them good :

2. OTHERS may and do take some care of the decency of their outward behaviour, that they may be acceptable before men : But we must watch over the most hidden movements, thoughts and desires of our hearts ;--labour to approve ourselves to the eye of God, and to keep consciences, as well as appearances, void of offence both towards God and man.

3. OTHERS will *sometimes* mind religion when they have nothing else to do, either for their worldly pleasure or profit : But we must make religion the *principal leading* business of our lives, to which all things must give way.

4. OTHERS perform the duties of religion, as a *disagreeable task*, either to stand fair in the opinion of men or to satisfy the importunate demands of conscience : But we must *delight* and *rejoice* in them, as our most sweet and pleasurable enjoyments.

5. OTHERS are ever contriving *how little* they may do in religion, in order to shun hell : But we must be ambitious to *abound in good works* ; that we may the more please and honour God, and enjoy a greater measure of his likeness and favour.

6. OTHERS, walking by sight and sense, take up their rest and portion in the things and enjoyments of this world ; ever anxiously enquiring who will shew them any earthly good :-- But, living and walking by the faith of unseen things, we must make God our *only portion* and *inheritance*, seeking and delighting in the

uplifting of his countenance, and the manifestation of his reconciled favour.

7. OTHERS are most curious in knowing and studying the characters and concerns of their neighbours : But we must be most diligent in the study and knowledge of ourselves and of *our own proper concerns.*

8. OTHERS are indulgent and favourable to themselves and their own failings, while they are severe and unmerciful observers and censurers of the sins and failings of their neighbours : But we must be *severe to ourselves; and charitable* in our judgment of *others, hoping all things and believing all things* in favour of our neighbour.

9. OTHERS, even *publicans and sinners*, may and do often attend the duties of public religion : But, we must also be found conscientious in the religion of the *family and closet* ; in the duties of *private and secret* devotion:

10. OTHERS perform *some duties*, and deny *some sins* : But we must be governed throughout by a principle of *uniform obedience* ; hating every false way, and having an equal respect to all God's commandments, as *holy, just and good.*

11. OTHERS square their religion by the fashion and custom of the places where they live : But ours must be *unfashionably singular* in this respect, being wholly measured by the law of God, which is the only rule and model of our obedience.

12. OTHERS are discouraged and disheartened from duty by the reproaches and persecutions of the wicked : But we must learn to *glory in the cross*, and to *rejoice in sufferings and persecutions* for the sake of Christ.

13. OTHERS will *sin* rather than *suffer* : But we must *suffer* rather than *sin.*

14. OTHERS render evil for evil, and railing for railing : But if we would be the true disciples of Christ, we must render *good for evil*, after the most amiable

and perfect example of him, who, “when he was reviled, reviled not again: when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously*.”

15. OTHERS are indulgent to their *favourite sins* and *beloved lusts*: But we must be particularly severe against *these*, plucking out the right eye, and cutting off the right hand.

16. OTHERS love their flatterers: But we must love our well designing reprovers.

17. OTHERS accept of Christ as a *Saviour from hell*: But we must also accept him as a *Saviour from sin*; embracing him in all his offices, as a *king* to rule us, and a *prophet* to teach us, as well as a *priest* to offer himself an atonement, and intercede for us.

18. OTHERS are for a *cheap* and *easy* religion which costs them little labour or self-denial: But we must chuse a self-denying religion; a *painful, diligent, laborious* course in the service of GOD.

• 1 Pet. ii. 23.

E S S A Y XXV.

Of HEAVENLY-MINDEDNESS, and the contrary VICES.

1. **H**EAVENLY-MINDEDNESS is a very comprehensive virtue, and essentially necessary to every Christian. It consists in the prevailing bent and tendency of the mind and heart towards God, and the things of God and heaven; and is directly opposed to *worldly-mindedness, earthly-mindedness, covetousness and sensuality.*

2. HEAVENLY-MINDEDNESS necessarily presupposes *regeneration, conversion*, a change of mind and heart by renewing grace, or a sanctified nature in some degree at least; for every man, by nature, is, *earthly, sensual, devilish*, not having the Spirit of God; --- seeing that that which is born of the flesh *is and must be* flesh; --- and seeing that the *natural and unrenewed* mind, is *enmity against* God.

3. HEAVENLY-MINDEDNESS will principally shew itself in the following instances:

(1.) IN a supreme regard to God above the creature. The heavenly-minded man loves God and the Saviour, although unseen, above all things in this world, by means of that faith which is the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for. No object of sight or sense so strongly moves the noblest affections of his soul, or so powerfully elicits and draws forth his desires, as an invisible God, and an exalted Redeemer, whom having not seen, he loves, and in whom, although now he sees them not, he yet rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory*. Tell

* 1 Pet. i. 8.

the heavenly-minded man of enjoying riches, power, pomp or honour;—recount to him the various gratifications and pleasures of sense--of women, wine, luxurious and delicate living;—place his affections to all these, and desires of enjoying them, over against his love of an unseen God and Saviour, and his desire of enjoying them:—put it to his choice, and he will despise the *former*, in comparrison*.

(2.) THE heavenly-minded man sees and enjoys GOD in his *works* and *providences*. His mind is turned to a contemplation of GOD in his vast and wonderful works. In these he has a deep and affecting conviction of the power, wisdom and goodness of him who made them all. He tastes the goodness of GOD in every enjoyment of sense; in every pleasure and refreshment. He eyes and enjoys GOD in every dispensation of providence. He receives every mercy as the gift of GOD, and a fresh obligation to gratitude, love and praise; and hears the voice of GOD in every affliction, reprov-ing, chastening and calling him home from sin, or quickening him to the performance of some long-neglected duty.

(3.) THE heavenly-minded man, converses with, and enjoys GOD, in his *word* and *ordinances*. He reads the scriptures diligently, with correspondent holy affections; with gratitude and spriritual desire and appetite. He hears GOD speaking to his soul in them; trembles at his word; delights in the purity of his laws, humbly submits to their authority, and feeds pleasurably upon his promises and offers of mercy. He frequents ordinances, with no other view than to *glorify* and *enjoy* GOD in them. In *prayer*, he really, humbly and delightfully converses with GOD. In *praise* his soul exalts and magnifies the Almighty. He hears sermons that he may,

* Psal. iv. 6, 7.—xl. 1, —4.—lix. 1, &c.—lxxiii. 25.

the better know God, and his duty, and love them; and that he may, by this means, cleanse his way, reform his life, and get strength for both. He prepares for sacraments and attends them, that he may actually renew his covenant with God, and receive comfort and strength to keep it stedfastly: And he has a pleasure and delight in these duties, superior to any which he feels in the enjoyments of this earth†.

(4.) THE heavenly-minded man has a turn for spiritualizing all the common occurrences and events of life. He is disposed to give a useful and edifying turn to every topic of conversation; and to profit even by the worst, or most common things that happen to himself, or to others around him. It would be endless to illustrate this remark.

(5.) THE heavenly-minded man, having his conversation, his heart, his hopes, his treasure, and the object of his dearest love, and strongest desire in heaven, must needs have a peculiar and uncommon delight in those companions, and in that kind of conference and discourse, which are employed about spiritual and heavenly things. Companions and conversation of this kind, exactly hit his taste, as his mind is high and heavenly bent. This is so just and obvious a character of heavenly mindedness, that it needs no farther confirmation or illustration.

(6.) THE heavenly-minded man may be said to live by the faith and hope of unseen and heavenly things. He considers this world but as a wilderness through which he is journeying towards his Father's house, and eternal inheritance. Hence, present things affect him but little, as present conveniencies would a travelling wayfaring man. He had rather have them than want

† Psal. xxvii. 4, 5. — lxiii. 1, 2. — lxv. 4. — lxxxiv. — xix. 7, -- 10. — cxix. 73, -- 127. — cxxii. 1, -- 4.

them; but if he suffers a little in his journey, he cares not much for it. His Father, his Redeemer and almighty friend, and his brethren and sisters in Christ which has left this world, are in heaven before him; his treasure is there; his rest, reward, crown, and inheritance are there.—His heart therefore must be there also.—He is therefore *habitually, believingly, hopefully and joyfully* looking forward to his journey's end. And indeed, the more eagerly that the eye of his faith and hope is fixed upon the heavenly prize, *i. e.* the more heavenly-minded he is, the less will he regard or mind the things that are around him, or the cross accidents that happen to him on his journey thither. Hence it follows, that he walks by *faith*, not by *sight*; looketh not on the things that are seen and temporal, but at the things which are unseen and eternal;—setteth his affection on things above, and not on things below. His fears and cares, hopes and desires, sorrows and joys, are chiefly of the *spiritual and heavenly* kind, and but *little, seldom, and moderately* moved about this world, and the things of it, which pass away. On the contrary, earthly-mindedness, discovers itself by the following marks:—A loving and preferring the creature above God:—the body and its concerns above the soul and its interest;—earth above heaven;—the objects and enjoyments of sight and sense, above those of faith and hope. The earthly-minded man, prefers money before grace;—earthly honor above heavenly;—the favour of men before that of God;—a good living in this world, before the hopes of heavenly blessedness. He is little moved by the *works or providences* of God; little affected by *his word*;—little delighted with *his ordinances or people*; has no pleasurable relish for holiness itself, or the means of attaining it: But performs these, if he does perform them at all, in a *customary, formal, carnal, lifeless* manner, to stop the

mouth of conscience; to please the world and promote worldly ends; or to be seen and praised of men.



ESSAY XXVI.

GOSPEL SINCERITY, or UPRIGHTNESS.

I. **G**OSPEL sincerity is expressed by two words:—The *first* signifies ‘a thing which will stand the test, if it is examined or judged of by the light of the sun, *eilikrinia*,’ and is used by the Apostle*, when he commands the *Corinthians* to keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth; or it may allude to the judgment passed on grain when it is winnowed, which will bear winnowing, and being separated from the chaff, looks the better.—Sincerity is something which will stand the test.—The other word is *aplotes* which is commonly translated *simplicity*; which signifies, a *thing without folds*, and intimates an open and undisguised behaviour, without deceit, guile, or dissimulation.—Thus we are commanded to have our conversation in this world in *simplicity and godly sincerity*; not with *worldly or knavish and deceitful wisdom*†. And according to this sense of the word we are commanded to lay aside *all guile and hypocrisy*‡. And the man is pronounced blessed in whose spirit there is *no guile*||. And *Nathaniel* is pronounced an Israelite indeed, in whom was *no guile*;—that is, a *plain man*, as *Jacob* is called¶.

* 2 Cor. v. 8.

† 2 Cor. i. 12.

‡ 1 Pet. ii. 1.

|| Psal. xxxii. 2.

¶ John i. 47. Gen. xxv. 27.

2. GOSPEL sincerity supposes a single aim and intention of pleasing God, in the whole of our course. And although this intention may not be actually alive in our hearts, as the moving and producing cause of every single action; yet if we are *sincere*, it must be our *habitual, prevailing intention*; and wherever we have time to *doubt or deliberate* about the nature of any action, this must be our *actual intention* in it; and that nothing contrary to this intention prevails with us. This is included in these general precepts of Christianity—
 “Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all
 “to the glory of God.—Whatever we do, we do it
 “unto the Lord, and not unto men.—Servants be
 “obedient to your masters with fear and trembling,
 “in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with
 “eye service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of
 “Christ; doing the will of God from the heart; with
 “good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to
 “men, knowing, &c.” The same is also meant by a *single eye*, and the contrary, namely, *insincerity* by the *double minded man, who is unstable in all his ways*.

3. GOSPEL sincerity, supposes an impartial enquiry into our duty, what it is;—a hearty desire and endeavour to know, in every instance, *what is the good and acceptable and holy will of the Lord*, and how we may *so walk as to please God*†. The upright man is anxious to know his master’s will in every particular case, and is ever ready to say, “Lord, what wilt thou have me
 “to do? And what I know not, teach thou me.”—He desires to have no *biass, prejudice, or prepossession* against the will of God, how cross soever it may be to his own will or former notions or prejudices. He desires to be excused from no part of his duty, how difficult or self-denying soever.—And as this is the *sincerity*

* Eph. vi. 5,--9. Col. iii. 22,--24.

† 1 Thes. iv. 1.

of his *disposition*; so he gives all diligence, by prayer, enquiry, reading, and a close attendance upon ordinances, to know the whole of his Master's good pleasure, that he may prepare himself to do according to it. But insincere men, are careless about the knowledge of their Master's will; because they are prejudiced against the performance of it, and *hold the truth in unrighteousness*. *Nathaniel's* conduct affords a fine illustration of this branch of sincerity; and our Saviour seems to fix the noble character he gives him, on his impartial enquiry after truth*.

4. GOSPEL sincerity runs through the whole of a man's religious character and conduct, and supposes an entire and universal application to the practice of duty, so far as we know it, without any stated, allowed reserves to the contrary. The sincere man, as his governing aim is to please and serve God, so he will be as careful of the exercise of every grace and virtue, in the frame and temper of the heart, as in the outward actions of the life.—He will be as careful and watchful over his *private* conduct, as his *public*;—as sorry for his *secret* sins, and the follies of his *heart*, as for his outward offences;—as devout and constant in the religion of the *family* and *closet*, as in that of the *church*;—as conscientious in shunning one sin as another, and in performing one duty as another. And indeed, there cannot be a more *clear* and *decisive trial* of our sincerity than this; namely, to examine and observe how we stand affected to those parts of morality and religion, to which none but God *and our own consciences* are privy. If we perform these as carefully and circumspectly, as we do the most outward and visible duties, which are seen and praised of men, then may we conclude on just grounds, that we have truth in the heart, and sincerity in the inward parts.

S

* John iii.

5. SINCERITY supposes a conformity and agreement between the sentiments of a man's heart and his words and actions. A sincere man will not say that he believes a doctrine which he really does not believe, to please, or gain the good opinion of any man. He will not speak of exercises, feelings, or experiences which he never had, in order to obtain any privilege:—He will not profess a sorrow for sin which he feels not, nor resolution of repentance and amendment which he never truly nor solemnly made. The sincere man, either speaks not at all, in matters of religion, or else speaks sincerely what he thinks. He *cansteth* not, he *dissembleth* not, he *lieth* not either *for*, or *to*, or *concerning* God, or the things of his soul.—St. Peter was flagrantly guilty of this kind of *insincerity*†, and so are all hypocrites.

6. THE same thing will sincerity produce in all our conduct *towards men*. A sincere man will scorn to use *trick*, *artifice* and *disimulation*, to gain his ends with his fellow-creatures; he will not pretend friendship or kindness where he has none; nor make promises which he intends not to perform; nor act an unfriendly part behind men's backs, after professions of respect and regard to their faces;—much less will he stoop to the baseness of making pretences of friendship, on purpose to impose on men, or use sly insinuations to draw things from them in the freedom of discourse, with the murderous design of divulging these very things afterwards to their disadvantage. This is the wicked cunning and craftiness of the old serpent, and not the *openness* and *sincerity* of a Christian indeed, in whom there should be no guile.

7. WE are obliged to this temper and conduct by numberless considerations: (1.) It is expressly required by the precepts of our religion‡. (2.) We cannot

† Gal. ii. 11,--14.

‡ Josh. xxiv. 14. John vi. 24. Rom. xii. 8. Heb. x. 22.

expect acceptance with God, in any duty, without sincerity, Jam. ii. 10. Matth. xxiv. 51. Phil. i. 10.

(3.) We cannot have peace of mind, or stand acquitted at the bar of our own consciences, if we are insincere in religion, 1 John iii. 19,---21. 2 Cor. i. 12, Gal. vi. 4.

(4.) To be sincere in religion, would save the professors of it abundance of trouble which hypocrisy occasions them. The easiest and surest way of seeming to be religious, is to be so in reality; and it is the most difficult and disagreeable task in the world to be ever wearing a mask and false disguise. (5.) Insincerity is the very image of the *devil*, that *subtile, malicious, deceitful, guileful* old serpent, who transformeth himself into an angel of light.

8. It is greatly to be lamented, that this noble virtue, which indeed is one of the most distinguishing badges of true Christianity, should yet be so little regarded, and so shamefully violated among professing Christians, that under the warmest professions of friendship, and the most solemn obligations to it, there should be so little besides *trick* and *artifice*, *deceit* and *disimulation*, *double-dealing* and *undermining* practised among Christian brethren. A clear, but melancholy proof this, that we have only a name to live, while we are in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and doing the works of our father the *devil*.

E S S A Y XXVII.

CHRISTIAN ZEAL, and its OPPOSITES and COUNTERFEITS.

1. **Z**EAL seems properly to signify, a *heat, fervour* and *impetuosity* of *mind* and *action*; and is either *good* or *bad*, either a *virtue* or a *vice*, either *religious* or *common* and *profane*, according to its objects, and the proportion it bears to their importance.

2. **EVEN** religious zeal is not so much a Christian grace or virtue, as a qualification which should attend the exercise of every Christian grace and virtue.

3. **THE** scriptures give as many instances of a *bad* zeal as of a *good* one; We cannot therefore be too cautious about what objects our zeal is employed, and in what degree, lest, while we imagine we are pleasing and honouring God, we may in fact be dishonouring and offending him, and increasing our own guilt.

4. **As** Christian zeal is, however, a very important and indispensable duty, and as we are expressly commanded to *be zealous**, it may be right to enquire into the properties of a true Christian zeal; to consider its specious and imposing counterfeits, to speak of the obligations we are under to be zealous, and of that temper which is contrary to it; and by doing this we shall exhaust the subject.

(1.) **EVEN** a religious zeal is no farther good and commendable, than when it is on the side of truth and virtue. The *cause* therefore must be *good* about which our zeal is concerned, or it will have the most mischievous consequences. To be zealous, that is, to have a

* Rev. iii. 19.

strong and ardent concern, for falsehood, and against truth; or for vice and against virtue, and to act vigorously in consequence of this zeal, is to do the very greatest mischief in our power, and to act the *devil*, as much as our capacities and influence will admit. Such was the zeal of the Jews against Christ, his Apostles, and the primitive Christians. Such, particularly, was the zeal of *Saul*, afterwards *Paul*; when he *madly*, and with uncommon ardor and activity persecuted the church of Christ*. The caution therefore of this same Apostle is extremely apposite and necessary; "It is good to be always zealously affected in a good thing†."

(2.) IGNORANCE of truth and duty, where there is a possibility and opportunity of coming to the knowledge of them, will not excuse in this matter, otherwise it would have excused St. *Paul* and most of the *Jews* in their misguided and mischievous zeal. Therefore, our zeal, especially our religious zeal, should always be preceded by a careful, serious enquiry into the truth, and accompanied with knowledge. The reason of this is plain; for, of all zeal, religious zeal where it is blind and misguided is the most furious and mischievous. It is increased by the importance of its object; and when it is blind and misguided, it rages against the cause and glory of God, and the highest concerns of men, which are truth and righteousness. We may see its dreadful effects in the primitive *Jewish* and *beathen* persecutions, and in the seas of Protestant blood spilt by the church of Rome. If the *Jews* had known Christ, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; yet since they *might* have known him, their ignorance was no excuse for their zeal against him. It

* Acts v. 17, 18. — xiii. 45. — xvii. 5. Rom. x. 2. Gal. i. 14. Phil. iii. 6.

† Gal. iv. 18.

was their sin, that their zeal of God was not according to knowledge*. What things Saint Paul did against Christ, were *ignorantly thro' unbelief*; yea, he verily thought that he ought to have done them; yet was he not thereby justified in doing them†.

(3.) RIGHT and good zeal, must be proportioned to the value and importance of the objects about which it is employed. As there is diversity in the importance even of these things which are of divine duty and obligation, so we should be most zealous about the most important things and duties of religion, and proportionably less zealous about those things and duties which are of less importance. It is the way of hypocrites to be mighty zealous about trifles; about small matters, and ceremonial observances, while they are very lukewarm and indifferent, about the greater duties of *piety and morality*. They tithe *mint, anise and cummin*; while they neglect the weightier matters of the law, *mercy, judgment and righteousness*‡. How preposterous and absurd is it to see a man break charity with his Christian brother, for the neglect of *modes, ceremonies, and human inventions*, while he would caress him, though a drunkard, an adulterer, or a profane swearer, if he observed these? Reason will teach us, that duties of the highest importance, should be the most ardently cared for, and the most diligently performed. We would deem him a fool, who would be more concerned about the security and welfare of his finger or toe, than of his heart or brain. Every thing appertaining to true religion merits our regard and observance; but the vitals of religion merit our warmest zeal. “God loveth mercy more than sacrifice, and righteousness more than all burnt offerings.”

* Rom. x. 2.

† 1 Tim. i. 12,—15.

‡ Matth. xxiii. 23, 24.

(4.) TRUE zeal always takes its rise in *the heart*, and is founded on a *right temper* and *right affections* there. It is termed *fervency of spirit*†. Christian zeal is the sprightly vigour, and strenuous activity of every holy affection and disposition; and these springs set the active powers of the soul and body to work in the cause of God and goodness.---And here we may take notice of the *opposites* and *counterfeits* of true zeal, in this view of it;---such as, *first*, a *Laodicean, careless, indolent, lukewarm* temper of mind: The person is neither hot nor cold;---he will not wholly throw up a profession of religion; yet is he too indolent and unconcerned to act up to it with becoming earnestness and intenseness, spirit and resolution. He, as it were, *halts between two opinions*; his mind is in a state of *torpid equilibrium*, without heat enough to espouse its interests and perform its duties, or coldness enough to abandon it and give it up. This is the sad case of millions in the Christian church‡. *Secondly*, there is a seeming counterfeit zeal for religion, where there is no warmth of *affection*, a *blustering, noisy*, profession, spending itself either in religious discourse or controversy, or in uncharitable and censorious judgments and railings against the characters and professions of others, where there is really no true regard to religion at heart. This seems to have been the zeal or (hypocrisy) of the *scribes* and *pharisees*; and is well described by the prophets. Or, *thirdly*, it is a dreadful counterfeit of true Christian zeal, when men make a great shew and stir in religion, merely to deceive others, and to obtain *wicked* or *secular* ends, as was the case with *Jehu*, when he said; “Come see my zeal for the Lord||.”

(5.) TRUE Christian zeal always begins at home; it first casts the beam out of our own eye; its indig-

† Rom. xii. 11.

‡ Rev. iii. 14,—19.

§ Ezek. xxxiii. 31. Psal. lxxviii. 36, 37. Isa. xxix. 13.

|| 2 Kings x. 16.

nation rises highest at our own faults; it is vigorously concerned for our own reformation, correction, improvement in knowledge and grace; perfection and final security and happiness. It is absurd to imagine that a man can have any right and true hatred of sin in others, while he has none against it in himself; or that a man should be anxiously concerned for another man's reformation, salvation and happiness, while he has no regard to his own.

(6.) TRUE Christian zeal is ever properly employed about others in the *second place*. Christians are zealous of good works, both in themselves and others*. We have instances of this kind, Acts xvii. 16. Rev. ii. 2. Charity should quicken our zeal both *against the sins* and for *the happiness* of others. David was grieved, and shed tears, when he beheld transgressors. — *Lot* was vexed by the filthy conversation of the wicked. Christ cast the money changers out of the court of the temple, and in this was fulfilled in him that scripture, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up." Paul's spirit was moved, at the sight of *Athenian* idolatry. True zeal will engage us to reprove the sins of others, in a proper place, time and manner. True zeal against sin, will make us shun sinful companions, Psal. cii. 4. — It will also engage us to do all the good for the souls of others that we can, Eccles. ix. 10.

7. THAT we may shun irregularities in the exercises of our zeal towards others, we should observe the following cautions: 1. Let us take heed of a censorious, uncharitable spirit in our reproofs of others. — This is a zeal *unchristian* and *without knowledge*, and is never likely to do any good. 2. Let us beware of *passion* and *wrath* in our zeal to reclaim and reform transgressors. Love to the person of the offender, and

* Tit. ii. 14.

† Ephes. v. 11. Tit. i. 10,—13. 2 Tim. iv. 2.

meekness should accompany our most zealous endeavours to reform him: For, in this case, as in others, *the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.* 3. The instruments of Christian zeal, are *scripture, reason and persuasion.* It is a wicked, antichristian, unwarrantable zeal, to destroy men's bodies, or rob them of their interests, for the good of their souls. This is the zeal of Popish inquisitors. 4. Our zeal should be tempered with *prudence.* The zeal of a private Christian cannot, with prudence, be carried so far in the reformation of abuses, as that of a *magistrate or public minister of religion.* Although every Christian should be zealous for the propagation of truth and goodness, yet the measure of his zeal should correspond with his station.--- Besides, the exertions of our zeal against sin should be regulated, by the character of offenders, and the nature of their offences. *Public, bold and shameless offenders are to be rebuked sharply.** Of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, *pulling them out of the fire†.* 5. Right zeal is exerted against all sin, both in ourselves and others.

(8.) TRUE Christian zeal is enforced upon us by many reasons and obligations: 1. The importance of religion deserves our zeal.--- 2. The difficulties that attend the right discharge of our Christian duty require zeal, and render it necessary--- 3. We can have no evidence of our own sincerity, without becoming fervour and earnestness in the duties of religion; for, considering the unspeakable importance of religion, if we are *truly* concerned about it at all, it must be *zealously*.--- 4. We shall never do much good to the souls of others, or much honour to our common Christianity, without a proper degree of Christian zeal.--- 5. We have the examples of the *prophets*, and of *Christ* and his *Apostles*, and of all eminently good men, to countenance and

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* Tit. i.

† Jude 22, 23.

encourage us in a zealous adherence to religion, and in the zealous practice of the duties of it.



E S S A Y XXVIII.

PATIENCE *and the* CONTRARY VICES.

1. **P**ATIENCE is *twofold*. It either, (1.) respects the evils of life which we are actually feeling; or, (2.) some future good, which we have reason to expect, but which we do not as yet enjoy. The first is expressed in scripture by the word *upomone*, which signifies an *enduring of afflictions with constancy*. The second by the word *makrothumia*, a *length of mind*, which signifies a *patient waiting for a promised good*, and is opposed to *hastiness of spirit**.

2. PATIENCE does not consist in *insensibility*, nor suppose it. It supposes that we *feel* the whole weight of our troubles and afflictions, but bear them with a Christian spirit and temper; and implies the following things.

3. THAT we have the command and possession of our own souls and are not ruffled or discomposed, by the cross or painful accidents of life; but that we are so much *our own man* as to see, and steadily to pursue and perform the duties which become us as *men*, and *Christians*.

4. PATIENCE will prevent us from making hasty judgments either concerning God or *man*; either against ourselves or others. *Impatience* makes men fretful and discontented, and hurries them on in the heat of their spirits, to rash and wicked judgments both of

* Heb. vi. 12. James v. 10. Rom. ii. 4. — xi. 22. 2 Cor. vi. 6.

God and man ; " I said, in my haste, all men are liars," and so Psal. lxxvii. 7,---10. Patience will make us consider, that we may be mistaken both with regard to the *designs* and *intentions* of God and man, and with regard to the *justice* and *propriety* of our afflictions, and will save us from many rash, wicked and uncharitable thoughts, both of God and our neighbour.

5. PATIENCE, will preserve us from using unlawful methods both of delivering ourselves from present afflictions and obtaining the things we desire,---if we are endued with Christian patience we will rather *suffer* than *sin* : We will rather continue poor and miserable, than better our state by forbidden and unlawful means : We will wait God's time and will, in the way of duty and honest endeavours ; being assured, that God will deliver us from trouble, and perform his promise to us in the very best and fittest time and manner, if we do indeed wait upon him and trust in him.

6. CHRISTIAN patience will engage us to persevere in the way of duty, in the midst of all discouragement and opposition ; because, it proceeds upon a supposition and firm unshaken belief, ' That whatever befalls us, is best and fittest for us upon the whole ; that whatever we suffer, we not only suffer deservedly, but it is *proper* and *needful* that we should so suffer, and that whatever God hath promised, shall surely be performed in the fittest and properest time.' In a word, it proceeds upon a firm, convictive and practical belief of the truth, wisdom, goodness and power of God, and of the perfect equity, wisdom and goodness of all his providential dealings with his creatures, and that if we do but our part, God never can nor will fail in his. Nay, that even his delays in delivering us from affliction, or conferring upon us his promised blessings, are just and right, merciful and gracious*.

* Job vii. 9. Heb. xii. 1, &c.

7. THIS grace is perfectly reasonable, and fit and becoming to be exercised by such creatures as we are, as will appear by the following reasons.

8. IMPATIENCE under afflictions, or in the delay of expected good, can be of no manner of service to us, but must do us a great deal of hurt. Our fretting and murmuring under afflictions, discompose us, and make their weight *double*. It shews a rebellious temper, and renders us unworthy of the relief which we desire; while, at the same time, it cannot procure us any relief, but must needs make our case worse.

9. We deserve no good thing at the hand of God, but all evil, even *eternal misery*; and therefore, if we *think right*, a living man has no right to complain, a man for the punishment of his sins; but it is his evident duty to bear the indignation of the Lord, because he hath sinned against him. If we had our deserts, we would be in hell; therefore, we should bear patiently every affliction, which is short of this.

10. EVEN where God hath made promises to deliver his people from afflictions, or to bestow upon them mercies, he hath not *ordinarily* limited himself to *any particular time*: but justly expects that we should refer the *time* and *manner* wholly to his own infinite justice, wisdom and goodness, and wait upon him believingly, confidently and resignedly for the event.

11. GOD's mercies and deliverances are so *full, complete* and *satisfying* in themselves; and the very smallest of them is so great an honour, when conferred by so great a being, upon such worthless, undeserving and hell-deserving creatures as we are, that it becomes us to wait patiently for them, in the most diligent and self-denying means, all the days of our lives. What are we that we should *set a time* to the great God, and be fretful, peevish and impatient, if he does not hear our

cries and gratify our desires, in sending us blessings and deliverances, which we have not the least claim to of right, and which we have wholly forfeited by our sins and provocations?

12. IN a word, if we would consult our duty to God, and our own highest interest and happiness, it behoves us to *let patience have its perfect work*, under every trial and affliction.



ESSAY XXIX.

MEEKNESS, and the opposite VICES.

1. **T**HE scriptures teach us to consider *meekness*, as referring, in its exercises, both to God and man.

2. MEEKNESS, as it is a right temper towards God, respects either his *word* or his *providences*.

3. As it respects his *word* or his *revealed will*, it consists in a humble, teachable submission to the authority of his word; that the soul bows to it and acquiesces in it, and sacrifices all its *prejudices*, *carnal reasonings* and *preconceived opinions* to its dictates. It implies the temper of young *Samuel*, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Or, that of *Cornelius's* household, "Behold, we are all here present before God, to hear what is commanded us of God." Thus we are commanded, *to receive with meekness* (with the eager, submissive, obedient temper of humble disciples, and with all readiness of mind) *the ingrafted word, which is able*

*to save our souls**. Thus Christ was anointed to *preach good tidings to the meek*: And God dwells with them who are of a humble heart, and who tremble at his word; and guides the meek in judgment†.

4. MEEKNESS towards God, implies an *humble, complacential submission* to his *providential will*, in its *severest and most afflictive dispensations*. And this is submission or resignation to the will of God, in opposition, to a fretful, murmuring, impatient spirit against his providence. The man who is thus meek towards God, is dumb and openeth not his mouth; and is still, and submits quietly to the rod; and humbles himself under the mighty hand of God, and accepts the punishment of his iniquities, and says with Ely, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good."

5. MEEKNESS, as it is a right temper of mind and spirit towards our neighbour, consists in a sweet and easy, courteous and obliging, peaceable and composed temper and behaviour, and is opposed to a boisterous, unruly, morose, revengeful, and more especially to a surly and angry temper and conduct towards others.

6. THE meek person is calm under provocations, and, having a command over his own spirit, is not hurried on to cursing, railing, reproachful language, or to hasty resentment and revenge, which always drives people of furious, ungoverned passions, to sinful, and often to very unjust and injurious extremes. The meek man will never be angry without a cause, or above measure; will never take an affront where none is meant, nor resent a real affront above what it deserves. He is slow to wrath; not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; speaketh not unadvisedly with his lips; rendereth not railing for railing; but, by soft and reasonable answers, turneth away wrath, and overcometh evil with good. Anger resteth in the bosom of fools: But it is not so

* James i. 21.

† Psal. xxv. 9. Isa. lxi. 1.

with the meek man; he letteth not the sun go down on his wrath. If his brother sin against him *seventy-seven* times in a day, and say, *I repent*, he forgiveth him, and easily maketh up any breach, upon proper acknowledgment and submission. *Peace* is his element, and wrath the aversion of his nature,

7. MEEKNESS discovers itself, in a great cautiousness of giving offence to others. Proud, angry, wrathful and turbulent men, are not cautious of this: They are perpetually giving offence, and seem to delight and glory in it, as a sign of courage. But the gospel teacheth us to speak evil, (unnecessarily) of no man; not to be brawlers, but gentle, kind, tender-hearted, thus shewing all meekness to all men*. The meek man is ever a civil, affable, courteous man; and a good heart teaches him that which is the grand precept in *politeness* and *true good breeding*; namely, to give no offence or uneasiness to any in company; but to endeavour to give pleasure and satisfaction to all, so far as that may be done with a good conscience.

8. MEEKNESS will shew itself in a modest and becoming deportment in every different rank, station and relation of life. It will make *servants, children*, and all *inferiors* contented and pleased with their low and inferior stations; the poor with their poverty, and the afflicted with their afflictions. And it will make superiors humble in their exalted stations, affable, and courteous, just and merciful, mild and gentle to those that are under them, in inferior states.

6. ABOVE all, a meek temper will shew itself in things that relate to religion. Surely the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. We are to contend indeed earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and not to deny or dissemble what we take to be the truth of the gospel, even at the risque

* Tit. iii. 2.

of life itself: But to manage religious disputes and controversies with angry contention and a persecuting spirit, is to defend and maintain truth in a manner quite opposite to the temper and spirit of the gospel, and which is never like to make proselytes. It is to offer a holy sacrifice with unhallowed fire,—and, like *Uzzah*, to pollute the ark of God, by a *wrong touch*: Therefore, we are commanded, “In meekness to instruct those who oppose themselves*.” To be ready to give “an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear†.” And even *offending brethren* are to be treated, and if possible recovered from the snares of the *devil*, “In the spirit of meekness‡.” Nay, the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, (or meek) full of “mercy and good works;”—and a wise and knowing man in religion, is to rule his tongue and angry passions, and to shew, out of a good conversation, his works, with *meekness of wisdom*||. Indeed, the very genius of the gospel is *meekness*.—It is the ministry of reconciliation with God and man.—It proclaims *peace upon earth*, as well as *good will towards men*.

10. WE cannot be Christians without this temper; without all *lowliness* and *meekness*: For, this is the very temper and spirit of Christ, and he has commanded us to take his yoke upon us and learn of him; for, says he, “I am meek and low of heart.” And this *temper* he eminently expressed through the whole of his own life.

11. MEEKNESS is one of the fruits of the regenerating, sanctifying spirit, without which we are sure, none will enter into the kingdom of heaven. Indeed, the most of these fruits, as enumerated by St. Paul, are

i 2 Tim. ii. 25.

† 1 Pet. iii. 15.

‡ Gal. vi. 1.

|| Jam. iii. 13, &c.

branches of meekness. "Meekness, love, joy, peace, "long-suffering, gentleness, goodness;"---and the greatest number of the works of the flesh, are directly the opposites of meekness; such as, "hatred, variance, "emulations, wrath, strife and envyings."

12. MEEKNESS is a grace exceedingly ornamental to the Christian character. We are commanded to be clothed with humility (which is a sister grace to meekness) "and to put on the ornament of a meek and "quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God, of great "price*." It is said also, "that he who is slow to "anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth "his spirit, than he that taketh a city†." The meek also are pronounced *blessed*, by our Saviour, and have a promise that they shall *inherit the earth‡*.

13. THE meek man has the only chance of going *easily, quietly and happily* through the world. Nothing that happens will much ruffle or disturb him, and his temper will render him beloved and admired by all.

14. LET us not mistake an *easy, indolent, insensible, cowardly* natural temper for *Christian meekness*. It is a grace of God's holy Spirit; and the true Christian is meek, not for want of true courage and sensibility of injuries received, but in obedience to the laws of God, and in conformity to the doctrines and example of his Saviour.

15. IF we would obtain this grace we must pray and strive to obtain it with *all diligence* and much *self-denial*: For, it is directly against the grain of our corrupt and sinful nature, and the prevailing maxims of the world. Indeed, no man will ever be endued with true Christian meekness, till he has been renewed by

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* 1 Pet. iii. 4.

† Prov. xvi. 32.

‡ Matth. v. 5.

the holy Spirit, and has learned of Christ to be meek and lowly of heart.

ESSAY XXX.

CHARITY, and the opposite VICES.

1. **C**HARITY is but another word for *love*; and when it is used as a term in divinity, in its largest and most extensive sense, it signifies the whole of our duty to God and man, both in its principle and proper fruits and effects. In a word, charity is the fulfilling of the whole law, and includes the two great commandments laid down by our Saviour as the sum and substance of the law and the prophets. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, &c. and thy neighbour as thy self." Charity, therefore, in this largest sense, implies a right temper of mind, both to God and our *neighbour*, and all its genuine fruits and effects, and therefore, is the whole of true religion and morality.

2. THIS grace or virtue, as it respects God, (1.) presupposes a right knowledge of God; that we know him, or have worthy and just conceptions of him in his adorable and amiable perfections (for there is not a more certain maxim, than that we can have no love for an unknown object;) and this knowledge, though it may be obtained in part, and in some degree, from his works and providences, yet it is most perfectly obtained from his revealed word, illustrated and set home upon the soul by the influences of his Spirit. (2.) It implies that we love him *supremely*, and above all other beings; for if we do not love him *thus*, we do not love him as God; or the affection does not correspond

with the object of it. (3.) It implies that we are cheerfully and cordially devoted to his service and obedience: "for this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments."

3. THE vices opposite to this branch of charity---are, (1.) A wilful and careless ignorance of God; a neglecting the means of knowing him and acquainting ourselves with him, without which it is impossible we should love him as we ought. (2.) An excessive *self-love*, or love of any creature, or creature enjoyment, by which the supreme love and affection of the soul is stolen away from God, and placed on the creature; which is *spiritual idolatry*. (3.) All sin and vice is a violation of this branch of charity; but more especially those sins, which strike most directly at the *glory of God*, such as *blasphemy*, *profane swearing*, *atheistical* thoughts and speeches, speaking irreverently and slighting of God, his works, word, ordinances, laws, and people. Indeed, the natural mind is enmity against God, and none but such as are born of him, can truly love him.

4. THE second grand branch of charity, and as essential as the former, is *love to our neighbour*. And this may be divided into two branches, *humanity* and *Christian charity*.

5. EVERY man, in scripture account, is *our neighbour*, be of what *nation*, or *religion* he will, and we owe *love or charity* to every man as such; as our fellow-creatures; a partaker with us in the same common nature; as sprung from the same original stock, a creature of the same God, an inhabitant with us of the same world; subject to the same feelings, passions, appetites, wants, necessities, miseries with ourselves, and bound with us to the same eternal world. From which relations naturally flow the duties of justice, sympathy, mercy, compassion, all springing from the root of charity or love to our neighbour. Hence we are to

owe no man any thing but love ; and *this love* is the *fulfilling of the whole law*, as far as it respects our neighbour ; because it will naturally and powerfully dispose us to treat our neighbour in all respects *as we ought*, wherever it truly takes place, and prevails in the heart.

6. CONTRARY to this branch of *charity* or *humanity*, is all injustice, evil-speaking, evil-thinking, or rash and censorious judging of our neighbour ; all narrow, national prejudices against men ; all local, contracted affections which shut out a party of mankind from our humanity, on account of their being of a different nation or religion from ourselves ; all envy, malice, and cruelty towards our fellow-creatures, and all partiality in the administration of justice.

7. CHRISTIAN *charity* or *love*, properly so called, consists in a peculiar affection for our fellow Christians, under the notion of their being *our brethren* ; disciples of the same LORD and Master ; spiritual children of the same God by adoption and regeneration ; heirs of the same precious hope, and incorruptible inheritance ; fellow-pilgrims in the same strange country, and fellow-travellers together to the same land of promise. This is still an advance upon humanity, and unites Christians together in the most peculiar bonds ; so that whatever is a violation of the laws and bonds of common *humanity*, is much more so of the laws of *Christian charity*. Indeed, charity, or Christian love, is the peculiar genius of christianity, and is that grace which Christ has honoured, by making it the peculiar and distinctive badge of his disciples. " By this, says Christ, shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you have love one for another." Nor is the exercise of any grace so warmly urged upon Christians, as this.

8. A PECULIAR fruit of charity is *alms-giving*, or relieving the necessities of the *poor*, the *needy*, the *miserable* and the *oppressed* ; and indeed, this is what commonly

passes in the world by the name of *charity*, though very unjustly : For, the Apostle assures us, that a man may give even all his goods to feed the poor, and yet have no *charity*. An alms, if it proceeds not from *charity*, that is, from a true Christian love to God and our neighbour, and from a principle of dutiful obedience to God, is no grace at all.

9. WE have an excellent character and description of charity given, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, &c. "Charity suffereth long and is kind ; charity envieth not ; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly ; seeketh not her own ; is not easily provoked ; thinketh no evil ; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth ; beareth all things ; believeth all things ; hopeth all things ; endureth all things : Charity never faileth. And now abideth faith, hope and charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity."



ESSAY XXXI.

CONTENTMENT, and the opposite VICES.

1. **C**ONTENTMENT is a grace which respects only our *outward condition in this world*, and not our spiritual condition here, or our lot and appointment in the world to come ; and it consists in such a moderate value for, and attachment to the things and enjoyments of the body and of this mortal life, that whether we have or want them ; whether we have little or much of them, we are so well satisfied, and so little disturbed, that we are thankful to God for what we

have, and are at *leisure* to enjoy both God and *ourselves*. In short, it consists in such a submission to God, and satisfaction with the allotments of his Providence, with regard to our worldly circumstances, that we may be able to say with the Apostle, "I have *learned* in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be *contented*; both to be full and to be hungry; both to abound, and to be abased and suffer need*."

2. CONTENTMENT cannot reach to a man's spiritual condition or future state; for, although a sinner may have reason to thank God that he is out of *hell*; yet, it would ill become him to say, "Whatever state my soul is in, whether in a state of grace or sin, converted or unconverted, I am therewith contented." The design of God's word is, that sinners should have no peace or contentment in their sinful and perishing condition, and that they should never rest contented, till their peace is made with God.

3. NOR would it become a gracious man to be contented with low attainments in grace and holiness, and an imperfect measure of conformity to God. Saints should be restless in their endeavours to *perfect holiness in the fear of God*; and forgetting things behind, to reach forward, and press on to the mark for the prize of their high calling. Phil. iii. 13, 14, and many other scriptures.

4. NOR is it at all to be supposed that any *human* creature *could*, or *should* be contented to be damned, and thrust out for ever from the beatific presence of God. All sinners, indeed, ought to acknowledge damnation their just portion, and approve the law and sentence which condemns them†: But it is against the *law of self-preservation*; yea, against our duty to God, to consent to be damned, or to be contented with this

* Phillip. iv. 11, 12.

† Psal. li. 4. Rom. iii. 4.

contentment. That strong expression, therefore, of St. Paul, Rom. i. 12, and that of Moses, Exod. xxxii. 32, must have some other meaning.

5. NOR is it to be *so contented* with our condition and circumstances in this life, as to be willing to take up our low portion and everlasting abode here. Christian contentment is consistent with the most earnest wishes and desires to be in a better country, even an heavenly; to be *absent from the body*, and the things and enjoyments of it, and *present with the Lord*; and only supposes, that as wise and prudent travellers, we are contented with such lodgings and fare as we meet with in our journey to our Father's house, and our heavenly inheritance.

6. NOR does contentment, even with our worldly circumstances, imply an insensibility of our difficulties and afflictions, or forbid lawful desires and endeavours to get rid of them by bettering our condition. Such desires are the foundation of diligence, industry, and the use of means, and therefore cannot be displeasing to God. But, contentment supposes, that if we are disappointed in the use of means, we acquiesce and are satisfied, without murmuring, convinced that such is the will of heaven.

7. CONTENTMENT is opposed to *covetousness* and *worldly-mindedness*, and supposes that our desires of the things of this world are low, modest and christian; that we seek not eagerly great things for ourselves, but bound our wishes and views to a moderate competency; resolving, that having food and raiment we will be therewith contented; seeing that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth.

8. IMMODERATE worldly cares and anxieties about what *may* happen to us in time to come, are inconsistent with Christian contentment, as they render men unea-

ly for the present, unfit them for the duties of religion, and speak a distrust of the providential goodness of God†. Besides, these cares and anxieties, although they destroy our peace, yet they cannot better our circumstances; for, *taking thought*, cannot add one cubit to our stature, or alter the course or allotments of divine providence.

9. ALL murmurings and repinings against the providence of God, as though God had dealt more severely with us than he ought or might have done, are inconsistent with Christian contentment. To remedy this, we should consider God's universal providence, and the equity and perfect rectitude of his ways, 1 Sam. iii. 18.

10. ENVY against others, who are in more prosperous and honourable circumstances than we, is inconsistent with Christian contentment. There can be no contentment in the envious breast. Why should my eye be evil against my neighbour, because God is good to him? If my neighbour is a wicked man, his prosperity will destroy him: If a good man, why should I envy his prosperity, and not rather rejoice in it; seeing God made him prosperous for wise and good purposes? Indeed, my envying my neighbour his prosperity or happiness, is a plain and convincing proof, that I myself do not deserve these blessings at the hand of God; and that if I had them, I would make a very bad use of them.

11. A TRULY contented man, however he may wish his condition better, yet never will use *unlawful means* to better it. This is to make haste the wrong way, to be rich, easy or happy; and shews great discontent. The danger of this is well painted, in one instance of it, 1 Tim. vi. 8,--10. See a good advice also against this kind of discontent, Luke iii. 14.

† Luke xxi. 34. Matth. vi. 34. Phil. iv. 6.

12. CONTENTMENT will engage us to make the best of our condition whatever it be. The contented man will survey his remaining comforts with gratitude to God, and comfort himself by considering how few and tolerable his distresses and misfortunes are, compared with those of many others. He will also endeavour to extract some spiritual advantage out of every affliction.

To engage us to contentment with our present lots and conditions; let us consider, (1.) That they are appointed by a God of infinite justice, wisdom and mercy. (2.) That let them be as bad as they will, we deserve still worse. (3.) That it is generally *our own fault*, that they are not better. (4.) That if we are indeed God's children, all will work together for good to us; and that our wants and afflictions are ordered *in mercy*, and because *need so is*: And if we are not God's children, we are punished *less*, much less than our iniquities deserve. (5.) That however *grievous* or *hard* and *uncomfortable* our lots are, our wants and miseries cannot be of long continuance, but must soon be terminated by death. (6.) That the best of men, even the *Son of God* himself, have been in worse present circumstances than we are; and yet were perfectly contented; from whose examples we should learn this grace.

E S S A Y XXXII.

CHASTITY and the contrary VICES.

1. **G**OD hath implanted in the sexes such appetites and affections towards each other as are necessary for the propagation of our kind, and without which, probably the first command, "Multiply and replenish the earth," would not have been readily obeyed. And it is here worth observing, as a proof of the divine wisdom and goodness, that a natural pleasure is annexed to those actions by which our kind is propagated, and life supported and sustained.

2. CHASTITY consists in the regulation of these appetites and desires between the sexes.

3. As GOD hath implanted no natural appetites in his creatures, for which he hath not provided lawful gratifications; so the appetites between the sexes, may be gratified in a lawful manner. Wherefore, chastity consists not in *eradicating* these natural appetites, but in *regulating* them; restraining them within the bounds of moderation, and directing them to right objects. Hence appears the unreasonableness of *celebacy* and a *monastic life*.

4. ALTHOUGH brutes, generally speaking, are remarkably moderate in the gratification of these appetites, yet they cannot be called *chaste*, having no conscience, and being under no moral or divine law. *Chastity* therefore is a *human* and *Christian* virtue, arising from reason, reflection, and submission to the authority of a divine law.

5. REASON and *reflection* will quickly convince us that the loose and unbounded gratification of the ap-

petites between the sexes, would be productive of the greatest mischiefs in human society; and therefore *marriage*, (the only remedy against this mischief) has been held sacred and venerable among almost all nations, who have had little else than the dictates of natural reason for their guide. Indeed, other gratifications of these appetites have been tolerated among some of them. And the more brutish these nations have been, the more unbounded and unrestrained have they been in the gratifications of these appetites, (witness the antient Britons.)

6. THE Christian revelation has limited the gratification of these appetites to *one woman* and *one man*, in a state of marriage, during the life of either of the parties; and has strictly, and upon the severest penalties, forbid the gratification of them in any other way: The reasons of which limitation and prohibition, are very wise, and sufficiently obvious: Hence we may learn what is *unchastity*, in *deed*, *word* and *thought*.

7. UNCHASTITY in *deed*, is when single and unmarried persons do at all actually gratify these appetites; or when married persons at all actually gratify them, with any other persons than their own husbands or wives; and is distinguished into sins of *fornication*, *adultery*, *incest*, *polygamy*, *sodomy*, and *self-pollution*.

8. UNCHASTITY in thought or desire, is when one of either sex, looketh upon one of the contrary sex, which is a forbidden object, so as to lust after them, or desire criminal converse with them. And how much more criminally unchaste must it be, so to inflame the heart with an absent, forbidden object, as to act over the guilty scene in imagination?

9. UNCHASTITY in word, is when we use such filthy obscene language, as has a tendency to excite unchaste thoughts and desires, either in ourselves, or others. In order to maintain and preserve our chastity,

the following things seem necessary and useful;—(1.) To pray for, and endeavour after *true conversion*, or a *new, clean, and pure* heart; for while we have a corrupt nature, our passions and appetites will ever be inordinate and ungovernable.—(2.) To shun all unnecessary intimacy and familiarity with forbidden objects of the different sex, by which we may insensibly contract unlawful desires, which may in time lead to criminal actions; or, where a friendship is cultivated between the sexes, to improve it to the promoting of purity and virtue.—(3.) To chuse and consort with such companions of our own sex, as are most chaste and modest in their language and deportment; and on the contrary, to shun all lewd, immodest, profligate companions, who will soon vitiate our taste, and corrupt our manners.—(4.) To be much in reading the scriptures, and such other books, as tend to purify the mind, and inspire chaste and holy thoughts; and cautiously to shun the perusal of loose plays, songs, romances, and such trash as corrupt and debauch the mind.—(5.) Often to examine our own hearts, and meditate on the extreme evil and danger of unchastity; how unlike it renders us to the pure and holy God; how unfit for his enjoyment, and how obnoxious to his vengeance; that burning lusts, are fuel to kindle unquenchable flames, in the place of torment.—(6.) Fasting and prayer, have been found excellent and effectual remedies for unchastity; and indeed, all the instrumental duties of religion should be used in this view.—(7.) Chastity agrees well with diligence and sobriety, and often dwells under the same roof with them.—(8.) Marriage is to many, the only remedy for unchastity; and it is a lawful and honorable one.—(9.) But, in short, without a new and divine nature, and grace in exercise, nothing will effectually secure either married or single from *unchastity*, either in *thought, word, or action*.

E S S A Y XXXIII.

HUMILITY, *and the opposite VICES.*

1. **H**UMILITY consists in a right judgment of ourselves, compared with other beings; and is opposed to the vices of *pride, arrogance, self-righteousness, self-conceit, vanity, and boasting and glorying* in one's self, with a contempt of others.
2. HUMILITY, like all the other Christian graces, must be seated in the mind, and thence display and manifest itself in our words and outward deportment; and therefore the Apostle exhorts Christians to "put on humbleness of mind."
3. HUMILITY does not consist in making a wrong judgment of ourselves or others, or in thinking less or worse of ourselves than we deserve; but in making a right and just judgment of ourselves and others on comparison; and if we do so, we shall have little reason for pride, arrogance or self-conceit. Nor,
4. DOES humility consist (as many have supposed) in mean clothes, dejected looks, and a complaisant cringing behaviour to our fellow creatures: All these may consist with the most insufferable pride and ambition, and are often only cloaks to conceal it. Yet the world makes humility to consist wholly in these things, and will not allow a man to have any pride, who is negligent or slovenly in his dress, or affable in conversation.
5. THE humble soul sees that he is *nothing* before God, or in comparison with him; that he is but a creature of a day, sprung from the dust, whose breath is in his nostrils, wholly depending on God for his soul

and its faculties, his body and its senses ; for every moment of his existence, every support and comfort of the present life, and every hope of future life ; and therefore, he *walks exceeding humbly with his God*.

6. THE humble soul sees that it is not only a *dependent* creature, but a *sinful, guilty, helpless, perishing, lost, miserable* creature, who has destroyed itself ; who deserves hell, and no kind of mercy or favor from God at all : Therefore, he is contented in all states without murmuring ; bears afflictions with patience ; is thankful for every, even the smallest favor ; rejoices in the glad tidings of a Saviour and salvation ; gladly disclaims and renounces his own righteousness and merit, and joyfully embraces and pleads the righteousness and merit of Christ ; comes to God poor and empty, wretched and miserable, humble and penitent, and falls down before the throne of his mercy, willing to accept the free salvation with the utmost gratitude, on God's own terms ; on *any terms*.

7. THE humble soul, knowing its own natural weakness, blindness, ignorance and fallibility ; how prone it is to errors, mistakes and prejudices ; readily renounces and disclaims its own weak, corrupt, fallible judgment in religious matters ; submits its reason and understanding wholly to the dictates of God's word and the *guidance of his Spirit*, and is willing humbly and gladly to learn from God and his *blessed Son*, the truths and duties of religion. He is not wise in his own conceit, or wise above what is written, but wholly submits his understanding to revealed truth.

8. THE humble soul thinks meanly of its own knowledge and goodness, compared with that of other men of nobler powers, and higher attainments and advantages ; esteeming others better than himself, and in honor preferring them. He is so far from *envying* such, that he honors and respects them as better and more

useful than himself; thanks God for his grace in them and his gifts to them; is ready to learn from and imitate them; speaks honourably and respectfully of them to others, and thereby endeavours to promote their usefulness in the world: Nay, he is not angry or offended, nor is his pride piqu'd, if they are honored more than him, and at his own expence. To bear this patiently shews true humbleness of mind.

9. THE humble soul, sensible that all its knowledge and goodness is *borrowed* and *derived*; is the fruit of God's gifts and grace, and of the opportunities and advantages which he has conferred upon it; and how very limited and imperfect its knowledge is at the best; how very little it knows of what may be known, and how imperfect its knowledge is of the things which it knows, how many degrees of grace and goodness there are between it and the perfection of holiness of which our nature is capable: The humble soul, I say, knowing and being convinced of all this, can never despise those who have less knowledge and goodness than himself; because, he hath nothing which he hath not received, and it is God who hath made him to differ, and he is still but a poor, imperfect creature, full of ignorance and corruption. This therefore keeps him from *spiritual pride*; from *self-righteousness* and *self-conceit*; from being puffed up, and from glorying in a state which is so very far short of perfection. He is humble, and pities the infirmities of others.

10. PRIDE was the first sin of men and angels, and is still the predominant vice of sinners, and the last sin which is totally subdued and rooted out of the human heart by renewing grace.

11. PRIDE *towards* God, shews itself by the following symptoms. Men who will believe their own vain imaginations, sooner than God's word; who set up their darkned reason, above the word of God, and their

own corrupt wills, above the will and law of God; who oppose God, and murmur against him, and will not accept of his Son and his righteousness, but believe they have righteousness and merit enough for their justification, are excessively proud: And this is the most hellish and provoking of all pride; yet, it is the pride of every unconverted sinner.

12. *PRIDE towards men*, shews itself in undervaluing and despising others, and preferring ourselves before them; in contradicting and opposing others upon all occasions; in looking down upon others as beneath our notice, and undervaluing all their good qualities and accomplishments; in speaking much of ourselves, praising ourselves, and boasting and glorying in our actions and dispositions.

13. *GAIETY* and fondness of dress, is a kind of *childish, womanish* vanity, which hardly deserves the name of *pride*. It is a kind of childish folly which deserves to be laughed at, and which no sinner of good common sense was ever guilty of. What? Proud of that which covers our nakedness and shame!

14. *THE devil* affords the highest example of pride; and the blessed Jesus of humility.

15. *PRIDE* is the most *shameful* and *absurd* vice of a man; and humility the most *amiable* and *ornamental* virtue of a Christian*.

* Psal. xxxviii. 6. Matth. v. 4.—xviii. 4. Isa. lvii. 15. Luke xviii. 9.—13. 1 Pet. v. 5. James iv. 6.

E S S A Y XXXIV.

SOBRIETY, *and the contrary VICES.*

1. SOBRIETY is a very extensive virtue, which is not only opposed to *drunkenness* and *intemperance* (as it is commonly understood;) but to all *levity of mind* and *irregularity of the passions, appetites and affections*.—Indeed, to be *sober*, is to perform the third part of our Christian duty. “We must deny all ungodliness and every worldly lust, and live godly, righteously and soberly in this world*.”

2. THERE is an intoxication or drunkenness of the mind, as well as of the body; and the *scripture* or *gospel sobriety* is particularly, if not chiefly opposed to this vice. All temperate and abstemious men, are not sober men. *Young women* and *deacons wives* are commanded to be sober†; and it would be indecent to imagine, that this was a caution against intemperance in drinking. Young men are exhorted to be sober-minded‡; which shews that this virtue relates to the government of the mind, as well as to that of the bodily appetites.—Sobriety is also opposed to *gaiety* and *vanity in dress* in women, and pertness or immodesty of behaviour: “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but with good works||.”—It is also opposed to *pride* and *self-conceit¶*: “Let no man think

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* Tit. ii. 12.

† Tit. ii. 4. 1 Tim. iii. 11.

‡ Tit. i. 6.

|| Tim. ii. 9.

¶ Rom. xii. 3.

“ of himself more highly than he ought ; but soberly,
 “ according as God hath dealt to every man the mea-
 “ sure of faith.”

3. SOBRIETY, therefore, as it is a *mental virtue*, seems to signify *gravity* and *decorum* of thought and behaviour ; and consists in a due and prudent regulation of the passions, appetites, affections and actions, and is opposed to *levity*, *fickleness* and *inconstancy of mind* ; to *pride*, *self-conceit*, and extravagant *passions* and *affections* of all sorts.---So that a sober man, is one who is discreet, humble, prudent, composed, patient, meek, grave and exemplary in all manner of life and conversation.

4. SOBRIETY is also often particularly opposed to intemperance in drinking*.

5. DRUNKENNESS which is the opposite to sobriety in this sense of it, is, in itself, a *great evil*, and productive of many others†. (1.) It is expressly and repeatedly forbidden in the gospel, under the penalty of forfeiting the favour of God and eternal life, 1 Cor. vi. 10. Gal. v. 21. Matth. xxiv. 48,--51. (2.) Christ and his Apostles, have warned Christians against it, in a very singular, and most urgent manner ; and no wonder, seeing it is in itself so beastly a vice, and attended with so many hurtful consequences with regard to men's *bodies*, *souls*, reputation and worldly interests. (3.) It is a vice peculiarly heathen‡. (4.) It wholly unmans us ;---renders us stupid and ridiculous, just objects of ridicule and contempt, even to children, servants, and idiots§. (5.) It incapacitates us for all the duties we owe to God, our families, our neighbours, and ourselves ; and puts us in the way of doing the most wicked and hurtful actions. (6.) It justly

* 1 Thes. i. 6,--8. 1 Pet. iv. 7. 1 Tim. iii. 2. Tit. i. 2.
 ---ii. 2,--12. Acts xxvi. 25.

† Prov. xxiii. 29, 30, 33.

‡ Rom. xiii. 12, 13, 14. 1 Thes. v. 8.

§ Prov. xxix. 1. Hos. iv. 11.

renders us unworthy of all trust and confidence from others. (7.) It lays us open an easy prey to all knavish and designing men; lays the foundation of many chronical and acute diseases, and generally brings its votaries to poverty, contempt, and an unpitied and premature death.

6. In order that we may be preserved from this most disgraceful and most destructive of all vices, the following maxims and cautions may be found serviceable.---(1.) Shun the company of such as are addicted to this swinish vice*.---Tarry not long among those who are in the way to excess, how sober soever their general character may be, lest you should be induced to run to the *same excess of riot*, and so contract a vicious habit.---(3.) Take care never to exceed that quantity of wine or strong liquor, which you find by experience to be a proper and moderate refreshment. The boundary of temperance is so very narrow, that we may easily exceed it; which, if we do, we lose the command of ourselves, and may quickly be hurried to the greatest length of excess.---(4.) Endeavour never to make strong liquor necessary to your refreshment. There is much wisdom in laying restraints on the appetites, at times, even in the use of innocent enjoyments. These wholesome restraints strengthen self-power and self-government.---(5.) Shun habitual idleness, which is commonly the parent of drunkenness, gaming and most other pernicious vices.---(6.) Frequently consider the *shame*, the *folly* and the *horrid guilt* and danger of drunkenness†.---(7.) Pray daily to God for a new heart, cleansed from the love of sin, and breathing after universal purity and perfection‡.

* Prov. xiii. 20.---xxiv. 20, 21.---iv. 14, 15. Heb. ii. 15.

† Deut. xxix. 19, 20.

‡ Rom. xiii. 12,--14.

E S S A Y XXXV.

CHRISTIAN COURAGE or FORTITUDE, and its opposites.

1. **F**ORTITUDE or courage, is that temper or disposition of mind which sets a man upon doing *brave* and *commendable* actions in the face of any *danger* or *opposition* which may lie in his way. Nay, the truly brave man is rather *animated* than *disheartened*, by the number or greatness of the dangers and difficulties which lie in the way of his duty. "The righteous is bold as a lion; and he that hath clean hands grows stronger and stronger."

2. CHRISTIAN courage or fortitude, is a being *bold*, *fearless* and *intrepid* in the cause of Christ, and in our duty and allegiance to him. As bravery in war has been ever esteemed the highest proof of courage, (because *life*, the dearest of all earthly enjoyments, is risked in war) so we borrow our idea of Christian courage, from the state of christianity in this world, which is very properly represented as a state of warfare;---and to exercise Christian courage, is but another phrase for 'being good *soldiers of Jesus Christ*,' who is called very expressively the *Captain of our salvation**.

3. COURAGE naturally supposes difficulties, dangers and opposition; for, without these, there could be no proper trial or exercise of this virtue. This therefore proves, that the Christian life, as a state of warfare, is not that easy, inactive, indolent thing, which the generality of nominal professors seem to imagine; but a life of conflict, full of hazards, difficulties and opposition; and that he who has never experienced and encountered

* 2 Tim. ii. 3.

these, has never yet truly enlisted himself under the banner of Jesus, nor waged a good warfare.

4. COURAGE, in order to denominate it a *Christian virtue*, must, as well as *zeal*, be founded upon *knowledge*, and a rational conviction, not only of the goodness of the cause in which we are engaged, but also of the difficulties we have to encounter; the risk we run; the measure of our strength; the aids and succours we have to expect, and the wages we have to receive if we come off conquerors. In short, it supposes that we have *counted the cost**.

5. THE necessity and expediency of Christian fortitude will appear from the *numerous, subtle and powerful* enemies of our salvation: (1.) From invisible, malignant spirits†. (2.) From our own lusts and corruptions, which treacherously take part with these spiritual enemies against us, and being, as it were, our very selves, are the more difficult to deny, mortify and conquer. (3.) From our fellow creatures, who too often use every artifice to allure us to sin, or to shame and fright us from duty.

6. THE *nature and number* of our Christian duties absolutely require the exercise of this virtue. What fortitude must it require to comply with that exhortation of our Lord, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me?" *Self-denial and self-conquest* are the noblest feats of courage, and require the exertions of a firm, resolute and determined soul. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city†. To be more particular; (1.) Repentance, which is a general

* Luke xiv. 26.—33. Phil. iii. 7,—14. Acts xx. 22,—24. Rom. viii. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 16.

† Eph. vi. 8, &c.

‡ Prov. xvi. 32.

and indispensable Christian duty, requires the utmost degree of fortitude and resolution to subdue and eradicate old rooted habits, and to deny ourselves such things as we have long had great pleasure in, and to abstain from which, will be extremely painful. We must forsake old companions; resolutely withstand their enticements to sin and vanity, endure their scoffs, and, at length, their rage. It may happen, that we cannot truly repent without disobliging our nearest relations and dearest friends; without discontinuing *gainful business*, as well as renouncing *beloved lusts*; or without making acknowledgments for injuries done, and restoring, with shame, what we have unjustly acquired. But under all these difficult and self-denying duties, the cowardly and irresolute man must shamefully succumb.

(2.) THE false opinions and depraved customs of the world make sad havock among human souls, and it is the duty of every Christian to oppose them, and to counteract their mischievous tendency. The evangelical precept is, "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds." Now, the false maxims and depraved customs of the world, like irresistible torrents, sweep the cowardly and irresolute Christian along with them. He hears his religious opinions ridiculed; his God irreverently mentioned; his Saviour traduced, and his pious friends made the laughing stock of fools, yet dares not reply; fears to be rude; dreads the ridicule or resentment of some fellow-worm—nay, perhaps the same pusillanimity leads him basely to lend the smile of seeming approbation to this wickedness, and at length cordially to fall into it himself. But the resolute and courageous Christian, dares to be singularly good; he dares to stem the torrent of popular depravity and corruption;—he dares to be pious and upright, against the example of *the multitude who do iniquity*.---He can

bear to be laughed at as an unfashionable fool, by both the great and little vulgar, with all the fortitude and magnanimity of a Christian hero. He shines as a light in the world, amidst a crooked and perverse generation, holding forth the word of life, and counting it all joy to be persecuted for righteousness sake. Were the whole world to deride, to persecute, to oppose him, he would, with the heroic leader of Israel's tribes, resolve, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*."

(3.) To be brief: Would we see the excellency and necessity of Christian fortitude, we must view the Christian in the following stations of duty and of providence---Reproving sin---opposing error---propagating truth---conflicting with temptation---struggling under the pressure of pain and heavy calamities and afflictions---exposed to the rage and malignity of persecuting zeal---and upon the very verge of eternity, encountering *death*, the *last* and *most terrific* enemy, in the Christian warfare :---Especially, in the awful hour of death, and amidst the agonies of dissolving nature, the irresolute man is stupified with horror. He dares not take a retrospect of his by-past life, nor look into the fathomless abyss of eternity. He recollects, that the face of man has often terrified him so, as to make him do violence to conscience : How then shall he behold the face of God, whom he hath offended through a sinful fear of man, and of whose words he has been ashamed before an *adulterous generation* ? *Fearful* he clings to life ; *reluctant* he starts back from the brink of eternity, and dreads the sight of his almighty judge. Dismal forbodings fill his soul with distressful agonies, and he quits the world, leaving the spectators under a painful uncertainty whither he is gone.---But the Christian who has courageously served his God in life, is generally bold as a lion in the near prospect of death.

* Job xxiv. 15.

To him, death is a messenger of peace. He triumphs over his terrors through the blood of the Lamb; enquires fearless for his sting, and demands his guidance to the unknown regions of eternity! *There* he expects congratulating angels to meet him. *There* he hopes to see God as his reconciled Father, face to face, and that wonderful God-man Christ Jesus, who was so much his friend as to die for him;---to see him exalted to the highest honours,---exalted to be his judge:---And recollecting some of the tokens and manifestations of his love, he desires now to testify to all around him, the *grace*, and *faithfulness* and *loving kindness* of his Lord. He dies in hope; dies exulting; moves and instructs the spectators of his exit, and perhaps does more honour to God, and more good to his fellow-men, in his death, than he has been enabled to do in all his life.

7. FAITH begets this virtue in the soul, and gives vigour to all its acts and exertions. (1.) By that faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, we perceive, that the cause we have espoused is good; that it is the cause of God and of Christ; the cause in which the eternal interest of our souls is embarked. (2.) By faith we see the arm of omnipotence stretched out for our succour, and may see, with humble confidence, that we have *almighty strength*, respecting what we have to encounter with in the way of our duty. How base then to be *dastardly* and *faint-hearted*, with such odds on our side? (3.) By the eye of faith we see the glorious Captain of our salvation spreading his standard over us---standing with a celestial crown in his hand to reward our valour, and millions of our fellow-soldiers, beholding, as it were, from the battlements of heaven, our behaviour in the Christian race and warfare. Seeing then we are encompassed with such a cloud of witnesses, ought we not, "Laying aside every

“weight, and the sin which easily besets us, to run with
“patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus*?”

(3.) By faith we look back and behold the gracious
army of *martyrs, apostles, prophets, and patriarchs*, who
were bold to attempt, and resolute to perform the most
arduous things. *These* have each conquered singly,
and triumphed. *These* were *men as we are*, and justly
expect that we should behave with equal ardour, fortitude
and perseverance in the Christian warfare. They
seem to chide our sloth, and animate us to activity by
observing, that ‘God is still almighty;---that our re-
ligion is still divine;---that our Redeemer is still the
same Jesus, and his gospel worthy as much honour
now as ever it has been.’

* 1 Cor. ix. 25. 2 Tim. iv. 8. Heb. xii. 1,--4.



ESSAY XXXVI.

The CHRISTIAN USES of the TONGUE.

i. **T**HE noblest use that can be made of the tongue,
is to *glorify* God; which is done by this little
instrument, (1.) By praying to him. Thus we ac-
knowledge our entire dependence on him for all that
is needful to our happiness. (2.) By praising him.
Thus we make known his loving kindness to his needy
undeserving creatures. (3.) By expressing our admi-
ration of his infinite perfections: Thus exalting his
great name. (4.) By confessing our iniquities: Thus
magnifying his grace, which continues with us, not-
withstanding our so great unworthiness. (5.) By con-

tending for the truth of his word ; testifying our confidence in it, and discouraging every indecent freedom with it. (6.) By vindicating his providential government, and displaying the wisdom, goodness and equity of his ways. These are, doubtless, some of the principal ends for which the tongue is given to man.

2. A VERY good and noble use of the tongue is, to promote by it the good of our neighbour ; which we may do, (1.) By labouring to instruct the ignorant in what may relate to the concerns of his body ; but more especially in what respects his soul. (2.) By commendation, in such manner as may be an encouragement to him to proceed in the way of godliness and virtue, so as to advance his good name, and extend the sphere of his usefulness : But in this good office, we should guard in a particular manner against flattery, or imprudent commendation, which is deadly poison to most men. (4.) By *peace-making* : There being nothing more destructive to religion and virtue than malicious strife ; nor any thing more unseemly in a Christian. Those therefore who are the happy instruments of removing this hellish evil from between men, are, in a peculiar manner, considered by the God of peace as *his children*. And, (5.) By vindicating injured characters and persons. This is doing very great service to men ; discovers a noble spirit, and is an office that procures the esteem of men, and God doubtless regards the discharge of it with complacence*. (6.) One of the noblest and most benevolent uses of the tongue, towards our fellow-creatures, after instructing them in the principles of religion, and animating them to the practice of it ; is to pour the balm of consolation into the wounded spirit. Words fitly spoken to the broken in heart ; to those agonizing souls who are sinking as it were, under the pressure of some heavy affliction into the black sea of

* Matth. xii. 35.--37.

despair, are indeed like *apples of gold in pictures of silver*. Can there be a more *God-like, Christian-like* office than to sooth the throblings of the anxious mind; to give it, "*beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness?*" This is one of the most amiable and benevolent offices of the gracious Redeemer, "*To bind up the broken hearted and to comfort all that mourn*.*" And such as imitate him in this branch of his prophetic office, are, to their sorrowing distressed fellow-creatures, as *rivers of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land*; They are *a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, and a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall†.*

3. ANOTHER Christian use of the tongue, is to manage it so as not to *destroy*, but to *increase*, mutual confidence among men. This must be done by maintaining a strict correspondence between *our words* and *our thoughts*. Whenever we speak, an honest upright heart should dictate our speech, and we should on no pretence, tell a lie, not even that good may come‡. Great regard should be paid in particular to our promises; to promise nothing or enter into no engagements but such as we are deliberately resolved to perform at all hazards.—In short, our words should contain nothing but truth, and the whole truth, reserving nothing, where the reserve would amount to the consequence of a lie in prejudicing any. Yet in some cases it may be lawful to reserve *a part of the truth*—or to use something of a feint. See 1 Sam. xvi. 2.

* Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 3.

† Isa. xxxii. 2. — xxv. 4.

‡ Rom. iii. 8. Psal. xv. 1, 2.

E S S A Y XXXVII.

The UNCHRISTIAN ABUSES of the TONGUE.

THE unchristian abuses of the tongue, form a strong contrast to the former subject.

I. As the noblest use of the tongue, consists in those exercises of it which tend to celebrate, magnify and glorify the blessed God, and set forth his excellencies to our fellow-creatures; so whatever has a direct, or indirect tendency to dishonour God, or give our fellow-creatures *wrong, mean, and unworthy* apprehensions of him, are the most *capital sins and abuses* of the tongue—such as, (1.) atheistical speeches: As saying, that *there is no God*; denying or disputing his being, or insinuating such hints and arguments, as tend to destroy this belief in ourselves or fellow-creatures. This is striking at the glory of God with a witness, and erasing the very foundations of all religion among men. Equally pernicious are those speeches and arguments, which, while they seem to admit the being of a God, insinuate, that he did not create, and does not rule and govern the world:—Or, allowing his universal providence, in giving general laws to nature, while they deny his particular providence, or his ordering and over-ruling all the particular actions of his creatures.—Nor is it a whit better to deny God's moral government of his rational creatures; that he is the *observer of men*; the witness and judge, the rewarder and punisher of their moral conduct. To this may be added the vile guilt of robbing God of any of his perfections, of his omniscience, omnipresence, his holiness, justice, mercy or

truth ;---or of extolling any of these perfections, to the prejudice of the rest.

(2.) BLASPHEMY : Either cursing God, as *Job's* wife would have persuaded him to do ; or challenging God to come forth, and do his worst ; or boldly and insolently defying his vengeance ; or charging him foolishly, as cruel and unjust, and laying more on us than we deserve ; or boldly calling down his vengeance upon ourselves or others ; or sporting with his judgments, undervaluing his mercies, and ridiculing his works, or word, or providences. This is to do all that we can to debase and vilify the Almighty, by speaking of him in a manner that we dared not to do of a dignified fellow-worm.

(3.) PROFANITY, nearly bordering on the former. Speaking slightly and disrespectfully of holy things and ordinances, and that holiness which is the image of God on his people ;---mimicking and mocking holy actions, such as prayer, preaching, the sacraments, and the like ;---making a jest of the scriptures, and using them proverbially to profane purposes ;---speaking slightly of the laws of God and the rules of holiness, as not worth our notice ;---making a mock at sin as a mere trifle, and talking of the most awful and serious matters, such as death, judgment, heaven and hell, in such a slight, vain, and sportive manner, as plainly shews that we have no practical belief of them.

(4.) SOLEMN perjury ; or calling God to witness a known lie, and praying down his vengeance upon us, in case our declaration be not true, when we know that it is not.

(5.) COMMON swearing ; which by the frequent and familiar abuse of God's holy name, lessens our own reverence and that of others for an oath ; turns the venerable name of *JEHOVAH*, into a meer *scarecrow*, or an *empty sound*, to convey our hellish passions to

others, and paves the way to *customary, horrid perjury*. This is an abuse of the tongue, which, besides its being forbidden by the word of God, on the penalty of his severest displeasure, is attended with neither pleasure, profit nor honour ;---is rude, barbarous, uncivil, and unmeaning, and fit only for *devils and damned spirits*.

(6.) THE common and profane use of GOD's name, even where neither cursing, swearing, nor damning is annexed to it: Such as, O GOD! O LORD! O CHRIST! *E Gad!* O *Je!* and GOD bless us! CHRIST bless us! and the like, when they are spoken in a *light, unmeaning, customary* manner: For, as GOD's name is sacred and glorious, so every *common use* of it, is an *irreverent abuse* of it, and is expressly forbidden in the third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain, &c."

2. As the next important use of the tongue, is to promote the good of our fellow-creatures; so, whatever tends directly, or indirectly to hurt or injure our neighbour, in any of his interests, is a *vile, unchristian, diabolical* abuse of it. Indeed, all the above-mentioned abuses of it, are against *Christian charity*: For, though they directly and immediately tend to dishonour GOD, yet they mediately and indirectly tend to corrupt and ruin our neighbour. Indeed, whatever sin comes the length of the tongue, is, and necessarily *must* be defiling to all around us, who are disposed to receive infection. But the abuses of the tongue, which are most immediately repugnant to Christian charity, are the following: (1.) *Direct lying, or untruth*: For, as the tongue and speech were given to be a true and regular *index and interpreter* of the mind; so a man who speaks not truth, is like a *clock* whose hand points to the wrong hour, or like a *compass* whose needle deviates from the true pole, *useless and worth nothing*. Besides, as truth is the foundation of all right intercourse between men, so there could be no living in society, or

transacting business with our fellow-creatures, if falsehood prevailed universally. Indeed, truth is so *sacred, valuable and important* a branch of Christian morality, and so essentially necessary to the wellbeing of human society, that it should never be violated, even in jest, or upon the slightest and most trivial occasions.

(2.) DISSIMULATION : Either by willfully concealing necessary truth, or speaking in a doubtful, ambiguous, enigmatical manner, with a design to deceive or mislead our neighbour.

(3.) DOUBLE-DEALING ; being fair to our neighbour's face, and otherwise behind his back.

(4.) MISREPRESENTING a *story or fact*, which is one of the most mischievous kinds of lying and back-biting ; for, by omitting *one single word or circumstance* of a story or fact, it may be quite altered to the unspeakable prejudice of our neighbour and of the truth.

(5.) DECEITFUL-PROMISING : Causing our neighbour to rely on a promise, which we either do not intend to perform at all, or which we have no hope of being able to perform punctually, at the time and in the manner proposed : This makes unspeakable confusion in the *trading world*, and in every other department of life, and tends effectually to ruin our character, and very often our neighbour's too, who is led to deceive others on the strength of our promise.

(6.) BEARING FALSE WITNESS against our neighbour ; either by telling known and malicious lies to the prejudice of our neighbour, in the way of calumny, slander and back-biting ; or by unnecessarily abetting, propagating and spreading the slanders of others, whom we have reason to suspect of malice against him : Much more, by taking away his life, interest, or good name, by perjury.

(7.) SPEAKING the very worst that we can of our neighbour, consistent with truth, with a designed con-

cealing any good qualities he possesses, on purpose to hurt his character or interest, or to impede his usefulness: For, we may do unspeakable hurt often, even by speaking *improper* and *unseasonable* truths: But nothing short of *Christian charity* and *prudence* can direct in this matter.

(8.) DIVULGING and *blabbing* out such secrets as our neighbour may have, in confidence entrusted us with, either with a malicious design to hurt him, or through meer imprudence, and a tatling disposition.

(9.) ALL such abusive, ignominious names and insulting language, either *of* or *to* our neighbour, as tends to break Christian charity, stir up anger, and occasion quarrels and law-suits; which besides their provoking nature and unhappy consequences, prove the want of charity, meekness, humility and patience, and are a scandal and disgrace to our common Christianity*.

(10.) ALL sporting with, and mocking at the *sins* and *natural infirmities* of our neighbour, and speaking, lessening degrading things of him, on account of the latter.

(11.) VAIN, *idle, unedifying* conversation, which neither tends to *comfort* or *improve* either ourselves or others, especially if it is continued long, to the destruction of our own, or our neighbour's precious time: For, we are told, we shall "give an account of every "idle word we speak at the day of judgment."

(12.) PROPAGATING evil, pernicious principles and doctrines, which tend to poison our neighbour's mind, and to pave the way for a vicious practice.

(13.) FLATTERING our neighbour in his follies and vices, and thereby feeding his pride and strengthening his hands in folly and wickedness; more especially, with the detestable view of getting some favor from him, or advantage over him, as the reward of this iniquity.

* Matth. v. 21,—26.

(14.) ABUSING our neighbour's confidence in us, by giving him bad or ruinous advice, when we hope to benefit by his complying with it.

(15.) CORRUPTING our neighbour, and seducing *him* or *her* to sin, and thereby committing the very worst kind of murder, both upon the soul and body of our neighbour.

(16.) BY filthy songs, or corrupt and prophane speeches, polluting and debauching the minds and hearts of our neighbours, and inducing them to the love and practice of sin.

(17.) INSTEAD of comforting the sick, afflicted and distressed, laughing at and insulting their miseries, and thereby doubling the burthen of their sorrows.

3. THE sins of the *tongue* are the most numerous class of all our sins, except those of the *heart*; and indeed, they will never be much lessened, until the heart is renewed and sanctified by divine grace.

4. As the sins of the tongue are the *most destructive*, as well as the *most numerous*, we had need to set a double guard over the motions of this unruly member, seeing that in no way are we like more to disgrace our Christian profession, than by an unbridled tongue.

5. THE right use and government of the tongue, is one of the *least doubtful proofs* of true religion.—“If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man. If any man among you seem to be religious and bridle not, &c.*

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* James i. 26.—iii. 2.

E S S A Y XXXVIII.

*The best METHOD of maintaining PEACE, Love, and
UNITY among CHRISTIAN BRETHREN.*

1. **C**ONSIDER, that although Christianity is a *perfect institution*, and tending to make *Christians perfect*; yet Christians being only in the way of cure, in a state of recovery, do not arrive at absolute perfection in this life, at least, not before death.

2. It is therefore *absurd and unreasonable* in one Christian to expect absolute perfection in the character and temper of another, while here below in the school of Christ. As long as I live, I will have my failings and infirmities, and my brother will have his.—Hence arises,

3. THE duty of, and obligation to, *mutual forbearance* among Christian brethren: For, if I hope and expect that any brother will *bear with my failings and infirmities* in temper and conduct, and will have pity and compassion on my weakness; justice and charity require that *I should bear with his*, and not be *over rigid and severe* in my requirements from him. If not, I do *not* unto others, as *I would they should do unto me*, and am become a transgressor of this golden rule of equity.

4. If this christian maxim of *bear and forbear*, or of *pitying*, and, in love, *forgiving one another*, is not regarded and observed, there cannot possibly be any such thing as a Christian society, great or small, held together upon earth.

5. THE failings and imperfections of our Christian brethren, though very undesirable in themselves, yet are over-ruled to serve excellent purposes in this state of

trial and probation: Upon them are grafted some of the noblest Christian virtues, such as *charity, meekness, patience, self-denial, compassion, forbearance*, and a *forgiving temper* — and they are excellent *touch-stones*, whereby we may examine and prove our own spirits, and discover whether we are indeed possessed of these Christian graces, *i. e.* whether we are Christians.

6. WHOLLY to break society and fellowship with my Christian brother or brethren, because *he* or *they* have offended me, speaks the most unsufferable pride. — It is, in plain construction, to presume that I myself am perfect and blameless, and need no forbearance or forgiveness from my brethren.

7. IF GOD should break with us for every offence, what would become of us? Yet the example of GOD and of CHRIST are expressly set before us for our imitation in this duty*.

8. BUT what are the terms and conditions of forgiving, or being reconciled with our Christian brother, when he offends us? I answer, *signs of true penitence*; and to forgive him, and be reconciled with him, and keep up Christian fellowship and communion with him, upon *these signs*, is a Christian duty so indispensably necessary, that our Saviour has charged us, if our Christian brother offend us, not only *seven times*, but even *seventy times seven*, *i. e.* 490 times in one day, and return, and say, *I repent*, we must *as often forgive him*†.

9. BUT are there not some offences, which, though they claim our forgiveness, yet give just cause of our quitting all Christian fellowship and society with our brethren? Answer. No offence can justify *private revenge* in a Christian. If my brother should even attempt to take away my life, and turn again and shew signs of true sorrow and penitence, I must as a Christi-

* Eph. iv. 2,--32, Col. iii. 13, 14.

† Matth. xviii. 15,--35.

an, forgive him and be reconciled with him; though, in such cases, public justice must be allowed to take place for the good of society: But, a man who is called a *brother*, may, by the *nature* and *number* of his offences, and by a *proud, haughty, impenitent* disposition, render himself wholly unworthy of Christian fellowship and communion in any society; yet so as to be again received and re-admitted, upon giving proper signs of true penitence.

10. BUT must we *so put up with*, and *forbear* the failings and infirmities of our Christian brethren, as to neglect the duties of *reproof* and *admonition*, lest we break the bond of peace, and provoke or displease our offending brother? Answer. By no means. This would be to *suffer sin upon our brother*. Unity and peace among Christian brethren, must be founded on, and comport with truth, integrity and a charitable zeal for each other's welfare. We are to continue rebuking and exhorting, in a Christian manner, but never to break the bond of Christian fellowship, till men appear to be *incorrigible reprobates*. *I have one failing, you have another*: I must bear with your failing, while I use every endeavour to correct it; *you* must do the same by *me*. No giving up with this mutual duty, till we both get to heaven; where, being both perfect, we shall have no need of mutual forbearance and forgiveness.

11. I WILL not renounce or disown my *natural brother*, nor quit the family, though he offends me, or is angry with me without cause. He is my *brother*, and a multitude of tender and endearing considerations plead for forgiveness, and a re-establishment of peace and unity: And shall I renounce and disown a *Christian brother*, and quit *the fellowship of the saints*, for the like reason, where the obligations to brotherly love are much more *numerous, sacred and noble*, and the motives to forgiveness and unity, much more tender and endearing.

12. THE same reasons which will engage us to quit one Christian society, because of the failings and infirmities of our brethren, should engage us to quit the fellowship of the church itself; and then we renounce all union and communion with the body of Christ, and putting ourselves out of the way of all the means of salvation, do *virtually* renounce heaven itself, *i. e.* apostatize!

13. IF we are indeed Christians, we must all *meet in heaven*, and *there* live together as friends, in one society for ever; And shall we part society for every trifle on the road, where we have so much need of each other's mutual advice, reproof, forbearance and charity?

14. CONSIDER the damage done to Christianity by *schism* and *divisions* among Christian brethren; the pleasure it gives to the *devil*; the tendency it has to prevent others from uniting themselves to those communities, from which deserters have carried off an evil report, and the malicious and wicked triumph it gives to the envious enemies of Christian union, communion and peace, and the injury it does to the great and noble designs of such societies.

15. IF a deserter from a religious society should be asked by an enemy of religion, what his reason was for deserting? Consider the danger he is in of wounding religion in the answer he must make. 'I did not like the men; or, I did not like their proceedings; or, I got no good, but rather harm, by being of the number.' Here a man speaks at once *uncharitably* of his Christian brethren, and *falsely* and *unfavourably* of the ways of God: For, few men are so just and modest as to declare the true reasons of such a conduct, and to lay the blame, where it properly is, upon their own fickleness, inconstancy, unchristian disposition, and distaste and disrelish to that which is good; or, perhaps, a mean and vile ambition to please and gratify some declared and malicious enemy to so good a design.

16. LET a man consider, whether, on his *death-bed*, he could approve of having broken the bonds of Christian peace and unity, and quitted a society, formed on Christian principles, and in which he might have both *done* and *received* some spiritual good; merely, because all his Christian brethren were not just, in all respects, such as he would have them; while he himself had possibly as great failings as any among them.

17. REAL *offences* from our Christian brethren cannot justify our quitting Christian communion: Much less *supposed offences*, or *real benefits*, so miscalled.



E S S A Y XXXIX.

The RULE of judging of our BRETHREN; against RASHNESS, and CENSORIOUSNESS.

THE general rule given by our Saviour to this purpose, may be found, Matth. vii. 1, &c. "Judge not that ye be not judged, &c."—It is evident, however, from *reason* and from *other scriptures*, that this rule has a great many important exceptions, and that our Saviour does not mean to prohibit *every kind* of judging of our neighbour.---For,

1. THE words and actions of state criminals, against the laws of their country and the peace and welfare of civil society, *may* and *ought* to be judged, condemned, and punished by the civil magistrate, whom God hath set apart for that very purpose*.

* Rom. xiii. 1,—8.

2. THE words and actions of Christian professors, as members of Christian societies, against the laws of Christ, and the duties of their Christian calling, may, and ought to be judged, censured, condemned, and spiritually punished, by the *Ministers* and other proper officers of such societies, who are authorised by GOD to this business†.

3. IT is so far from being a *sin*, that it is an eminent proof and branch of love and Christian charity, to fear for our Christian brethren, and be jealous over them with a godly jealousy, lest they should be overtaken by the temptations which surround them, and to warn and admonish them against their danger‡ ;---also, to *judge* and *condemn* them for things plainly *erroneous* in their principles, or *immoral* in their conduct, and in tenderness and love, sharply to reprove and rebuke them||.

4. WE *may* and *must*, yea, we are directed and commanded, to judge of men by their words, actions, and outward deportment; indeed, it is next to impossible for us not to exercise our judgment in some way or other, about every action we see and attend to; and truly, without the exercise of this faculty of judging, we would have no rule or guide in our transactions with mankind, but should often be unavoidably exposed to the greatest injuries.

5. CONSEQUENTLY, when our neighbour gives clear proof of his wickedness, by a continued series of wicked words and actions, and by a manifest disinclination to that which is good, we have certainly a right to *judge of the tree*, by the *badness of its fruit*, and to condemn such an one as a *bad man*; yet not interfering with his future state, as he is still in the place of repentance¶.

† 1 Cor. v. 11, 12. Heb. xiii. 17.

‡ 2 Cor. xi. 3.

|| Lev. xix. 17. James v. 19, 20.

¶ Mark vii. 15. James i. 26.—iii. 11, 12.

6. THE kind of judging therefore here forbidden by our Saviour, must be *rash, censorious, ignorant, uncharitable* judging; a judging, not so much of men's persons, as of their states, not so much of men's actions, as of their intentions; and may be confined to the following particulars.

(1.) JUDGING out of our province, or passing a judgment on persons or things which we have no right to interfere with. Ministers have no right to interfere in the proper office of Magistrates; nor Magistrates, in those *peculiar* to Ministers†. The Apostle would not *censure* or *infect* *spiritual punishments* on those who were *out of the church*‡:

(2.) PRAGMATICALLY judging, deciding and determining in matters above our knowledge and reach, and where we can have no evidence of the truth, which is the only ground of right judging:—Such as *ignorant men*, censuring *deep and learned opinions*,---or our taking upon us to judge of the *thoughts and designs* of men's *hearts*.

(3.) SEVERE censuring and judging of others, for things in their own nature indifferent. Pretending that to be wrong in men, which we cannot prove to be so; requiring that in them, which God hath not required; forbidding that to them which God hath not forbidden, and condemning them for not *doing* or *forbearing* such things.

(4.) BLIND and *rash* judging of our neighbour, without plain and sufficient conviction of his guilt. A disposedness to censure, and pass sentence against him, before we know the crime, or know he is guilty of it: Suspecting him of evil principles and evil designs in his actions, and raising these suspicions into accusations against him, before full evidence, or any evidence at all

† Luke xii. 13, 14.

‡ Cor. v. 12.

appears, whereon to ground these suspicions.---This is censoriousness and rash judging with a witness; inconsistent with *equity* or *brotherly love*.

(5.) TAKING up an evil report against our neighbour, upon *hear-say*, or mere *common fame*, and joining with the censorious and malevolent world, in the *bue* and *cry* against our neighbour, before a particular and candid inquiry into the truth of the allegation. This proves that we have no Christian love for our neighbour, no tenderness for his good name; but that we delight in scandal, and are evil disposed to our neighbour.

(6.) CRUELLY and unmercifully making the very worst of our neighbour's conduct; without making proper allowances for the temptations he lay under, and the disadvantageous circumstances in which these temptations might attack him. These often greatly *alleviate* the guilt of the actions; and sometimes totally *alter their nature*, and even *justify* them. See the *sheaf of bread* eaten by *David*, and the ears of corn plucked by our *Saviour's* disciples.

(7.) PREJUDICE and *partiality* in judging and condemning the actions of others; censuring them through hatred or dislike of their person, rather than an abhorrence of their crimes; passing that fault over slightly in ourselves, or in our friends, which we aggravate and condemn without mercy in our enemies, or even in indifferent persons; being quick in seeing the *mote in our brother's eye*, while we excuse and justify *the beam in our own*.

(8.) UNCHARITABLE judging of others; which includes a number of cases:---1. All evil-surmisings, and groundless suspicions and jealousies.---2. Putting the worst construction on men's conduct, while it will bear better.---3. Taking upon us to judge of men's thoughts and principles, when there is nothing reproachful in their actions.---4. Judging of men's *spi-*

ritual state and condition, that it is evil, upon reasons which God's word does not justify.---5. Running down a character by the wholesale, when there may be many *good* and *praise worthy* things in it.---6. Condemning *whole nations* or *religious* sects of men in the lump, when there are many excellent persons among them.---7. Imputing to men opinions and consequences, which they do not allow nor hold in order to expose them to hatred and contempt.---8. To interpret calamities which befall people, as *judgments from God* for things we dislike in them; or for some supposed injuries to us, or to our friends.---9. To be backward to admit fair tokens and proofs of repentance for *real injuries* done us; and to be unforgiving and irreconcilable, and rashly to give up all our hopes of sinners, and all endeavours for their good*.---10. To publish the real faults of others *without occasion*, or without a very good and warrantable design;---and much more to do it *wantonly* and *maliciously*.---11. To slander *whole families, kindreds, nations, sects, or parties* of men, for faults done by *one* or *a few* of them, which the others could not prevent, and which they do not approve.

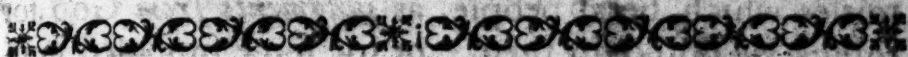
Reasons against Censoriousness, or rash and uncharitable judging.

(1.) It is iniquitous in itself. (2.) It is against the golden rule; "What ye would that other's should do unto you, &c." (3.) It is odious to God, being the very reverse of that charity which he has established as the rule and principle of all our transactions with our neighbour. (4.) It is so hateful to men, that censorious persons are generally paid in their own coin, and their own actions the more strictly scanned and the more severely censured.---"For with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged, and with what measure

"ye mete, it shall be measured to you again*." It is a dreadful abuse of our time, and misuse of our talents, turning our thoughts and judgment uncharitably on the actions and affairs of others, while we have so much need to *study, judge, and condemn* ourselves†.

* Matth. vii. 1.

† 1 Cor. xi. 31.



ESSAY XL.

Of a PEACEABLE DISPOSITION, and the opposite EVILS.

1. **T**HE very distinguishing spirit and genius of Christianity is *peace and love*; and one of the fruits of the spirit is *peace*;---not only a sense of reconciliation and peace with God through the merit and intercession of Christ, and, as a fruit of this *peace of conscience*, or an inward complacential well-pleasedness with our own state and frame, arising from the joyful hope that we are objects of the divine favour, and have passed from death unto life;---but also a *loving and peaceable disposition towards all men*, arising from Christian principles and motives.

2. THIS peaceableness being a fruit of the holy Spirit, must *begin*, and be *radicated* in the *heart and temper*. So far as it is truly Christian, it supposes a *change of nature*: For, although some men are more indolent and easy in their temper than others, and are naturally averse to quarreling, and fond of ease and quiet, yet they cannot be said to *love and study peace*, upon gospel motives, until their natures are changed and renewed

by the God of *peace*. Such persons may be said to flee from contention, as a coward from a man that bruises him; not from a true and hearty dislike to quarrelling or love of friendship.

3. PEACEABLENESS, therefore, as a Christian temper, supposes not only an hearty love and value for peace, from the amiableness of such a temper *in itself*, from the *authority of God* who enjoins it, in imitation of the example and Spirit of Christ, who set us the brightest pattern of it, and from the valuable purposes it serves in the world and church; but also, zealous and unwearied endeavours to maintain a peaceable disposition in ourselves towards all men, and to promote it among others. A pretence to love peace, while we are litigious and provoking, impatient, fretful and peevish, stubborn and refractory, and while we promote the quarrels of others, is the vilest and basest hypocrisy.

4. THE Apostle tells us, "If it be possible, as much as in us lies, to follow peace with all men." This plainly supposes, that, however we ought zealously and sincerely to endeavour it, and to let nothing fail on our part, in order to obtain this universal peace with mankind, yet the thing may be often *impossible to us*; and that, in such cases, we cannot charge ourselves with blame.

5. THIS may happen through the perverse humours of those with whom we have to do. Captious persons often take offence without any occasion, and will hearken to no reason against their preconceived prejudices. The more you yield to them, still the more unreasonable are their demands; so that the only way of being at peace with them, is to break off all intercourse and connexion*.

6. WITH others we cannot be at peace without violating our consciences, or acting contrary to our duty.

* Psal. cxx. 5, 6, 7.

If we do our duty to them, or upon them, they will not be at peace with us : But we cannot, we must not buy their peace and good-will so dear, as to sell our own peace with God for the purchase. Neither *truth*, nor *holiness*, nor *justice* are to be sacrificed for peace. To obtain peace *with men*, we must not make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience *towards God*. Consequently, those who in a modest and charitable manner, maintain and defend their own religious principles against adversaries,—or zealously reprove vice, cannot justly be charged with *unpeaceableness*.

7. To do what in us lies to follow peace with all men, implies, that we humbly lay aside all *pride* and *prejudice* in the pursuit of peace ; that we *try*, and *try* and *try* again, without wearying, as far as we lawfully may, to obtain this desirable end ; and that we labour zealously to promote the peace of our neighbours, without widening their differences by ill offices*. A *proud man* can never be a *truly peaceable man*. He who would seek peace and pursue it, must not be ashamed to humble himself, confess his faults, and make every needful and reasonable concession, in order to the re-establishing of peace.

8. THIS Christian grace of peaceableness, is not confined to a few friends, or to a favourite party, but must extend to *all men*. Some think, that if they can live at peace in their families, with their friends, their next neighbours, or their church, it is immaterial what temper they have to the rest of the world, those of other islands, kingdoms, or religious professions. But peaceableness, as a Christian grace, arises from a principle of *universal love and charity to ALL MEN*, and therefore has ALL MEN, for its object. As we are to love ALL MEN, and do good to ALL MEN, so, as much as in us lies, we are to live peaceably with ALL MEN ; and

* Psal. xxxiv. 14.

for this purpose, our Saviour teacheth us to consider every man as our neighbour, and every true Christian in the world, be he of what denomination he will, as our brother. To this purpose,

9. WE should be careful to behave inoffensively to all men*. A peaceable temper will restrain us from insolence, rudeness, injurious reflections, and outrageous passions towards others: It will engage us to study men's tempers, and be tender of using such innocent freedoms, with passionate persons, as might be no temptation to others who are of a milder temper. It will restrain us from acting the busy-body, by intermeddling unnecessarily in the affairs of others, or prying into their secrets with a design to reveal them, whereby they are provoked and others inflamed. It will also engage us for conscience sake to give unto all, in their several stations, that honour and respect which is due to them, and the neglect of which might be just matter of offence†.

10. A TRULY peaceable man is *slow* in taking offence: *slow* to wrath. It is amazing how many disturbances and contentions happen in the world, by apprehending offences where none are either meant or given. A peaceable person, will be loath to suppose that an affront is designed against him; he will be ready to put the best construction on doubtful words or actions; nor will he over-rate a real offence, or be willing to resent it in a hasty and rigid manner.

11. A PEACEABLE man is not implacable, but is desirous to regain and re-establish peace as soon as possible. Peace is his element; the very temper and complexion of his soul; and therefore, when a breach happens, he watches and lays hold of the very first op-

* 1 Cor. x. 32.

† 1 Tim. i. 13. Prov. xxvi. 20. 1 Theff. iv. 11.

portunity of reconciliation ; finding himself unhappy while in a state of variance with his neighbour*.

12. A PEACEABLE man will rather put up with many smaller injuries, than proceed to the rigour of justice, or commence law-suits, which are not only expensive and redious, but almost ever widen the breach, inflame the angry passions, and procrastinate and protract the wished for term of reconciliation†. ABRAHAM affords us a fine example of a peaceable temper§.

13. WE should be most assiduous in cultivating peace and good-will, with such with whom we are most nearly connected, such as our families, neighbourhoods and churches ; for, as from these, we have daily temptations to anger and contention, so our strongest guard should be placed where the greatest danger lies. Besides, the maintaining and promoting of peace in these connections, is the surest way of promoting our own duty and happiness, and that of others around us.

14. ABOVE all, Christians are under the highest and most inviolable obligations to be at peace with one another, by the *laws* and *motives* of their holy religion. They are the children of the God of peace ; the disciples of the *Prince of peace* ; peace is the bond of union among themselves ; Christ has bequeathed his peace to them, and, if they are *Christians indeed*, they are animated and aided by the *Spirit of peace and love* : Besides, by an *unpeaceable, strifeful, contentious* temper, they at once *belie and disgrace* their profession, and injure the interests of their common Christianity||.

15. AN unpeaceable temper is a *carnal, mischievous, diabolical* temper†.

* Matth. v. 23, 24. Luke xvii. 3, 4.

† Matth. v. 39,—41.

§ Gen. xiii. 8, 9.

|| 1 Cor. xiv. 33. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Eph. iv. 2,—6. James iii. 17.

† 1 Cor. iii. 3. James iii. 14.

16. It is always the fruit of *pride, ambition* and *passion*.

17. It is a temper which brings continual *disquietude* and *torment* to a man's self.

18. On the contrary; a *peateable* temper is an *happy* temper, and attracts the regard and esteem of all.

19. It is the distinguishing temper of heaven, and a necessary qualification for that blessed place and state.

† James iv. 1.

§ Isa. lvii. 2.



ESSAY XLI.

Of a MERCIFUL TEMPER, and its opposites.

1. **MERCY**, is a *kind, compassionate, sympathising* concern for the *miserable*, which prompts to a readiness to help, relieve, or at least alleviate their miseries, when it is *in the power* of the merciful; and *fit and right* to be done.

2. As there could have been no place for the exercise of the divine mercy, unless misery had made its entrance among creatures; so, nor could there have been place for the exercise of mercy between man and man, if mankind were not miserable.

3. **MERCY**, as it is a Christian virtue, must have its seat in the *heart* and *temper*; therefore, we are commanded to "put on bowels of mercies." It is also like all other Christian graces, a *fruit of the Spirit*; a part of that image of God reinstamp't upon the fallen

soul, in conversion.—There may be a *counterfeit appearance of mercy* in the actions, from *ostentation*, or *base and unworthy designs*, where there are *no bowels of mercies*, but rather a *cruel or unfeeling disposition*. The Apostle puts the highest outward appearance of a merciful disposition which can be well conceived, and yet supposes, that the person may be wholly void of the grace of mercy itself*.

4. A MERCIFUL disposition, where it is, will give evidence of itself by *outward correspondent actions*. A pretence to a merciful disposition, where there is no outward fruits of it, when proper opportunities offer themselves, is the vilest mockery; and is finely exposed by the Apostles *James* and *John*†.

5. THERE may be a very merciful disposition in the heart, where the person who has it, has it not in his power to give very convincing proofs of it, by his actions. However, where it is, it will prompt a person to *do all that he can* to give proof of it. He will, at least, *pity* and *sympathize* with his suffering fellow-creature, and what he can do more, he will do it to relieve him. Now, if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted of GOD, according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not‡.

6. MERCY, as a Christian grace, has its first and chief respect to *men's souls*; the troubles and miseries which they suffer, and the dangers to which they are exposed by sin: And indeed, this concern for the misery of men's souls, is the chief character which distinguishes *Christian mercy*, from *mere humanity*. How many good natured men in the world, whose hearts bleed to see a fellow-creature in bodily pain or misery, and who would go almost any lengths to relieve him; yet have no mercy on their own souls, or the souls of

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* 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

† James ii. 15, 16. 1 John iii. 17, 18.

‡ 2 Cor. viii. 12.

their fellow-sinners, but would see them go to hell, and help them thither, without the least attempt to prevent it: But Christian mercy *bleeds*, and is *moved* chiefly by the *misery* and *danger* of *human souls*; does all that it can to instruct the ignorant, and to reclaim the wicked and erroneous;—and what it cannot do itself, it rejoices to see done by others, and gives every encouragement in its power, to designs and endeavours to reform men's manners and save their souls, that they may be plucked as brands out of the burning.—Noble proofs and examples of this merciful disposition, we have in *Lot*, *David*, the *Prophets*, and especially in *Christ* and his *Apostles*.

7. MERCY is not confined to the *soul*, but reaches to the *whole man*. Here it strikes in with *humanity*, and improves it; weeping with them that weep, and looking not only at its *own things*, but also on the *things of others*. It pities and sympathizes with the pains and diseases of others bodies; the troubles and perplexities of their minds; their wants and necessities; their disasters and disappointments; their oppressions and afflictions. And when in its power, it labours to mitigate all these afflictions, by drawing out its soul to the hungry; by clothing the naked; by helping the sick; by pleading the cause of the oppressed; by administering counsel to the perplexed, and comfort to the sorrowing and afflicted. And whereas, *mere humanity* only does these things from *instinct*, and to ease the anxiety of the mind on the sight of distress;—the merciful Christian does them from love to his neighbour, from a consideration of duty, and from obedience to the authority of God.

8. But a merciful disposition is seen in its greatest lustre and advantage, when it pities and forgives persons who, by injurious treatment to ourselves, are wholly at our mercy, and upon whom we have it fully in

our power to glut our revenge; yea, when we may do so under the colour of justice. This is *God-like* mercy indeed! But,

9. It belongs to Christian *wisdom* and *prudence* to judge, *to whom*, and *how far*, such acts of mercy should extend. That lenity which would prompt us to give up our rights upon all occasions to lawless men, might often be of mischievous consequence:—It might often tend to harden sinners in their vices, and embolden them to treat others as they have done us, with hopes of impunity. By forgiving a man who attempts my life, I may procure the murder of other innocent persons. By pardoning and giving liberty to a robber, whom I have caught breaking open my house, and pillaging my goods, I embolden this villain to rob my neighbour's. Nor is it in all cases proper or prudent for a man to forgive personal injuries, without legal satisfaction and exemplary punishment. Acts of lenity and mercy to offenders, should always consist with a proper concern for the public good, and our own personal safety.

10. CHRISTIAN mercy, however, is always sorry for the authors of injuries, and heartily wishes their *repentance* and *eternal welfare*. It will never admit of cruelty or revenge against an offender. If his crime will admit of it, it is willing to forgive him, upon proper marks of repentance. If punishment is necessary, it would have it to be of the mildest and gentlest nature, that the offence will admit of; and it pities the person of the guilty sufferer, and would rejoice if the punishment might be wholly remitted;—having nothing at heart but the interest of human society, virtue and justice; and, like God, taking no pleasure in the misery of sinners.

11. THERE is also ample room for the display of mercy, in the exaction of debts. If the debtor is

fallen into poverty by accidents or misfortunes, it will bear with him, if able; or if able, and circumstances allow, will remit *part* or *whole* of the debt: Or, if he is even bankrupt by his own fault, and therefore, justly deserves to suffer as a criminal, yet it will consider the necessitous circumstances of his innocent family and connexions, and will remit what it can on their behalf.

12. THOUGH mercy should extend to *all* in these instances; yet it will be shown in the *first place*, and in the *highest degree*, to those whom God and nature hath connected most intimately with us; such as our families, relations and friends: For, it would be a preposterous disposition, and not Christian mercy, to pity and help strangers, while our own household, kindred and friends were disregarded by us, in their misery. — Above all,

13. OUR *Christian brethren* claim a *peculiar part* in our bowels of mercies. If one member suffers, all the members should suffer with it. “We are to bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

14. OUR *heathen slaves* are proper objects and excellent tests of a merciful disposition. Their *case* and *state* is allowed to be very *pitiab*le and *miserable* upon almost all accounts. They often provoke us, and needs must. They are, in a manner, entirely at our mercy, and their very lives in our hands. They are *our fellow creatures*, and *might* and *should* be our *Christian brethren*. They are *God’s creatures*, and *our neighbours*, whom we should *love as ourselves*. And surely, if a merciful man, will be merciful even to his *beast*, much more ought he to be so to his *human slave*! — It may therefore be depended on, that those who have no pity for their slaves, but are of an *unfeeling, cruel, merciless* temper towards them, are strangers to this grace.

15. THIS is one of the most amiable and God-like of all the Christian virtues, being that temper by which

we do, in a most eminent manner, resemble and bear the image of the blessed God, and his Son *Jesus CHRIST*; who forgive us *ten thousand talents*, and are merciful to the *evil and unthankful*.

16. It is declared, that they "Shall have judgment without mercy, who shew no mercy;" and, "That if we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will God forgive us ours. With the merciful, (says David) God will shew himself merciful; and blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain the mercy of God."

17. It needs not be added, that a merciful disposition, is one of the most *amiable* and *endearing* accomplishments in a man, and stands the fairest chance of rendering him universally beloved by his fellow creatures.

18. LET us then, *as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on bowels of mercies*.

* James ii. 13.

† Psal. xviii. 25. Matth. v. 7.

E S S A Y XLII.

JUSTICE *between MAN and MAN.*

1. **J**USTICE is a very extensive virtue, and implies a *right and fit temper and deportment towards all beings* to whom we stand any ways related, with whom we are any way connected, and with whom we have any concern. In short, "It is to render unto every one *his due.*" And, in this *general view*, it may be called, *integrity, uprightness or righteousness.*

2. If we act *justly* towards God, we shall love, reverence, and esteem him supremely, and above all things; we shall believe, obey and trust him without reserve, and we shall worship and praise him, according to his glorious perfections.

3. If we are *just* to the *holy angels*, we shall love them as our fellow-creatures; as the subjects and servants of our Redeemer; as pure, holy, and benevolent beings; and, more particularly, as ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who are heirs of salvation, and as deeply and affectionately interesting themselves in *our* good, and in *our Redeemer's* glory.

4. If we are *just* to our *fellow men*, we shall love them as ourselves; we shall sympathize with, and help them in their wants and afflictions; we shall conscientiously abstain from *injuring* them in their persons, families, reputation, or interests; we shall deal fairly, truly, candidly and equitably with them in all dealings and transactions of life; we shall perform to each of them the honours, duties, or services, which of right belong to them, according to the various relations in which they stand to us, and we shall do what we *can*

and *ought* to promote both their temporal and eternal welfare.

5. If we are *just to ourselves*, we shall prefer our souls to our bodies; eternity to time; and the favour of God and eternal happiness, to all the alluring, deceitful offers of sin. We shall be humble, patient, meek, modest, just, charitable, self-denied, and every thing else which we ought to be.

6. BUT as justice between man and man, is that branch of equity or righteousness, which we are here to consider, it may be most beneficial to take a view of that excellent *rule and measure* of it laid down by our Saviour, Matth. vii. 12. "Therefore, all things, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them."

7. THE measure of our acting towards others, here proposed, is not what they *actually do* to us, but what *we would they should do to us*. Yet this is the measure by which most men act towards their neighbours: They render evil for evil; railing for railing, &c. Nor will they do good to those who will not do good to them. Nay, many think themselves justified in cheating others, because they first cheated them. But this is *retaliation and private revenge*, not *equity*. The gospel has taught us a quite different rule of acting, and denies to Christians the right of private revenge, farther than *self-defence* requires*.

8. IT is not, *in all cases*, lawful to do unto others, what *we would they should do unto us*, were we in their circumstances, and they in ours, without presupposing the *lawfulness* or *fitness* of the action. A criminal might be glad that his judge would acquit him; but could not *reasonably* expect it. A drunkard would be glad that his neighbour would intoxicate him, yet he ought not for that reason to make his neighbour drunk, be-

* Luke vi. 31,--35. Rom. xii. 19,--21.

cause it would be unlawful. A poor man might be glad if his rich neighbour would give his whole estate to him; yet how could he reasonably expect it?

9. THE *spirit* of the precept is plainly this: 'In all our transactions with our neighbour, we ought, laying aside prejudice and partiality, to suppose ourselves in our neighbour's place and circumstances, and he in ours; and then we should attentively consider what we might *reasonably* and *lawfully* expect from him, if he were in our place, and we in his; and accordingly, we should be the same to him in our thoughts, words and actions, as we would *have him to be unto us*, if the tables were turned.'

10. WHERE *selfishness* and *prejudice* keep the possession of the mind, men will never act right upon this rule; for, where these are, we shall ever expect *more* from others, than we would do unto them, if our circumstances were changed. How common is it to see persons make very *free* and *merry* with the failings of their neighbors and their families, and think they have a right to do so without giving offence? Yet when it falls to their turn to be *so treated*, they resent *highly*, and perhaps *justly*, the same treatment from their neighbour. How many, who in their necessity, have no bounds in their expectations from their neighbours, and never think they do enough for them; yet have no bowels of compassion for the poor, when the tables are turned, and they become rich. All this proceeds from selfishness and prejudice; a want of considering what is right and fit to be done.

11. As to the *excellency* of this rule, and *our obligations* to conform to it, they are both self-evident. It is founded on the *sameness* of nature in men, and their *natural equality*. The relative and accidental differences between men, are small in their own nature, and very

transient and changeable. He that is now a king, may be soon a subject: The master may soon be a servant: The rich may soon be poor; and the honourable may fall into dishonour and contempt. I may need that justice or kindness from my neighbour to-morrow, which he demands from me to-day. It is plain then, that there should be *one common rule or measure* of justice and equity for all men. If it is unjust to keep two kinds of weights and measures, one to *buy* with, and the other to *sell* by; it is surely equally unjust that I should have *one law for myself*, and *another for my neighbour*.

12. THIS is a rule of justice which has obtained among all nations, it being a clear dictate of reason, and of the law of nature,—‘Not to do to others what we would not bear from them; and to do to others, in all cases, what we would reasonably expect from them.’

13. As this is a rule, the equity of which is so clear and self-evident, that none can dispute or deny it; so it is easily carried about with a man in his memory; and an honest man of the weakest judgment can easily and quickly apply it, on the most sudden emergencies. Most arts and sciences are so tedious and intricate, that they are hard to learn, and difficult to retain. The artist and mechanic can do little without his books and instruments.—But this art of doing justly depends only upon *one short single rule*, easily retained, and not easily forgotten. In short, to act justly in all cases for ordinary, needs only a *single honest appeal to the heart and conscience*, by the light of this rule; “All things whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, &c.

14. THIS is *the law of the prophets*: It is a short and comprehensive summary of all the directions recorded in scripture, how one man should behave to-

wards another: For, as that precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is the fulfilling of the whole law, in the duty of *Christian charity*; so this is the fulfilling of the whole law in the matters of *justice and equity*.

15. THE use of this precept extends to the whole of our intercourse with our fellow-creatures, and to all our *thoughts and words* about them. It would prevent all rash, uncharitable and censorious opinions and judgments of our fellow-creatures, and all injurious actions towards them.—It would lead us to usefulness and inoffensiveness in conversation; to integrity and rectitude in all our dealings and commerce, and to a right method of treating those who need our compassion or kindness. It would regulate our temper and conduct under provocations, and teach us a just and charitable way of speaking and acting towards those who differ from us in their *religious or other sentiments*.—And, it would teach us a just and equitable conduct to superiors, inferiors, and equals.

16. THE *excellency and usefulness* of this rule, shew us the great importance of *self-acquaintance and reflection*, on which it is founded, and by the *medium* of which it must be practised on.

17. THE equity of this great law and measure of justice, proves to a demonstration, the *holiness, justice, and goodness* of God's laws; how far they are from deserving the character of being *hard and grievous* impositions, tending to deprive us of our natural liberty. He who acts and lives justly, acts and lives according to the *law of his nature*, which is the law of *eternal reason*:—"And what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

18. WE should pray without ceasing, that God may write this law on our souls, and keep it ever in the

thoughts of the imaginations of our hearts, so that we may never swerve from this universal rule of righteousness.



E S S A Y XLIII.

CHRISTIAN HOPE.

1. **T**HE *Christian hope* is a firm expectation of that future and eternal happiness, which God hath promised to his faithful obedient people, upon a rational and well-grounded persuasion, that they have complied with the terms of his gracious covenant.

2. THE object of Christian hope is the *divine promises*, contained in God's word; for, it is upon his word that he causeth his servants to hope: And it ever presupposes, a firm faith in these promises.—Christian hope, therefore, is ever built upon *faith*, and can reach no farther than its foundation: For, we cannot rationally *hope for*, or *expect* that which we do not believe that we shall receive.

3. I HAVE said, the object of Christian hope is the divine promises; though it may be rather said to be the blessings contained in the divine promises, the chief and most comprehensive of which is, God himself, as the *chief good of our natures*, the comprehensive sum total of all our happiness; and therefore it is said, by way of eminence, "That our hope may be in God," as the ultimate object of it*. For, if we pursue every

* 1 Pet. i. 31.

promised blessing or happiness to the source of it, we will find it centered in God, and flowing from him to

4. CHRIST is also sometimes called *our hope*, as the channel of all divine blessings to us, and the great *promulgator* and *revealer* of the divine promises. And we are said to abound in hope, through the power of the *holy Ghost*; because, as he is the worker of *faith*, so of *hope*, in the hearts of Christians; bearing witness with their spirits, that they are children and heirs of God; confirming their rational inferences as to the goodness and safety of their state; persuading them of the power and faithfulness of God, and the certain accomplishment of his promises, and sweetly assuring their hearts, so as to raise them above tormenting fear, anxious doubtings, and distracting despair.

5. THE primary foundations of Christian hope, as well as of Christian faith, are the *unchangeable truth* and *almighty power* of God.—He cannot lie, and he can do all things which are the objects of power; consequently, he can neither *deceive our faith* nor *disappoint our hopes*. Whatsoever therefore God hath said or promised, we can never confidently enough expect and hope for, nor firmly enough believe.

6. MEN may be strong in the Christian hope, giving glory to God; that is, they may firmly believe the truth of his word, and the sure accomplishment of his promises to his people, while they may be very doubtful of their own state, and so be deprived of the *joy of hope*: For, as hope supposes faith, and faith rests upon a divine promise; while we cannot clearly and rationally apply this promise to ourselves, we cannot yet hope for the accomplishment of it to ourselves.—Yet we may clearly see our title to the promised blessing on condition we did but truly believe and apply the promise. Hence it clearly follows,

that our hope must ever keep pace with the evidence of our title to the promised blessing. Where we have no rational evidence of this, we can have no rational hope; and according to the *strength of our evidence*, such will be the *strength of our hope*.

7. HENCE it is also clear, that all the hopes of wicked men, and even of men (however sober, moral, and orderly in their lives) who are yet without any rational evidence of their being truly religious, are mere *wicked, groundless presumptions*, which only serve to keep up their fatal security, and to render their damnation the more certain and the more dreadful: For, how dreadful must it be for those men to find all their *towering airy hopes*, piercing them like broken reeds, and breaking under them like a spider's web, only to render their fall into endless misery and despair the deeper and more distressing?

8. HENCE it appears, that *despair*, is a more promising symptom in wicked men, than the most *confident hopes*. And that the foundation of a true Christian hope in all such, must be laid deep in an utter despair of ever seeing the face of God in mercy, while they continue void of true religion, and under the power of wicked habits.

9. CHRISTIAN hope is distinguished from worldly hopes, by the *excellency of its objects*, and the *stability of its foundation*. Its principal object, as we observed, is God, and an eternal state of glory and happiness, in his presence, wherein we shall be conformed to the image of his Son; and its foundation is the *divine power and faithfulness*; so that it is a *sure, glorious and blessed hope*. But *all, all* sublunary hopes are mean in their nature, uncertain in their attainment, and deceitful and unsatisfying in their fruition and enjoyment.

10. To hope for the perfection of our nature, and the full enjoyment of God, is a *glorious hope*, which by

its very nature, tends to raise, purify and refine our souls, and which, when enjoyed, will leave us not a single wish or desire ungratified: But earthly hopes; the hopes of honours, wealth, power, or sensual pleasures, are of a low, mean nature, and naturally tend to depress and sensualize the mind: And, even when they come to be attained, how do they disappoint us? How little do they please and satisfy us? How often have we cause to be ashamed of them? And how often does the very fruition of them turn out to be our greatest evils and vexations? But it is peculiar to the nature of the Christian hope, that it *maketh not ashamed*, because the fruition exceeds our highest expectations.

11. How uncertain are we of the attainment of our earthly hopes and desires? How many have eagerly and diligently pursued some one trifling earthly hope (that, suppose, of being rich, or being honoured or respected) all their days, and yet could never attain it, but have been perpetually crossed and disappointed in all their expectations? This is the reason why *young men* are generally more sanguine in their hopes and expectations from the world, than *old men*, who, by a woful experience, have so often found all their hopes from it frustrated, and that all its most gay and promising appearances, are extremely flattering and deceitful. But it is the distinguishing characteristic of the Christian hope, that it is a sure and certain hope; and those who enjoy it know it to be so. Although the objects of the Christian's hope, are future and unseen, yet his hope gives them a presence and reality, and therefore the patient waiting for this hope, is attended with joy and comfort. The interval of a thousand years did not weaken *Abraham's* hope of the promised *Messiah*, but he *rejoiced to see his day*, because he knew that *God was faithful who promised*. Such also is the Christian's

hope of future glory; though he has not yet seen it, yet believing, he rejoices in assured expectation of it, with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

12. HOPE is exceeding suitable to our *present state*. —In heaven it is excluded by full enjoyment, and in hell, by utter despair: But, as we are here in a *middle state*, between the two worlds;—as we are now in a state of trial and expectance, it is perfectly fit that we should be governed and influenced by the hope of a future reward, which tends, on the one hand, to quicken our diligence in our proper work, and on the other, to preserve us from slothful despondency.

13. HOPE is highly necessary to the Christian in the present state. Surrounded with temptations both terrifying and alluring, to draw us away from our duty, the hope of salvation is our *helmet and breastplate*; tossed with the storms of doubts, perplexities, worldly cares and persecutions, hope is the *anchor of the soul*, sure and steadfast, that enters within the veil, and, being fixed on the immortal shore, gives the soul security and rest; harrassed with sore afflictions, and passing through the dark valley of the shadow of death, what could support us but the Christian hope? This was the boast of the afflicted Apostles; They gloried even in tribulations, rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God; they reckoned their greatest sufferings not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed; looking at things invisible and eternal, they knew their *light and momentary* afflictions wrought out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. This was the support of the *martyrs* under all their sufferings in the cause of Christ: “Blessed are ye when all men persecute you: Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven*.” In short, hope

* Matth. v.

sets all the springs of Christian activity to work ; sweetens the most difficult and self-denying duties of religion, and is that which only can make men eminent, useful and diligent Christians.

14. TRUE Christian hope, may be distinguished from *carnal confidence* and *presumption*, chiefly by its *quickening* and *purifying* effects. "He who hath this hope in him, purifyeth himself as God is pure." If we believe the many great and precious promises of the gospel, and are caused to hope for their accomplishment, "We shall cleanse ourselves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God." When a man's hopes do not purify his soul, nor make him diligent in his Christian duty, but leave him wicked, careless and slothful, it may be depended on, that they are mere groundless presumptions ; those hopes of the hypocrite which perish. The Christian hope is a *lively hope* ; the inward spring of fervent desires, reviving joys and zealous endeavours. The man who has got a believing view of the high prize of glory, presses on towards it, with unremitting diligence, and purifies *himself*, because he knows none but the *pure in heart*, will receive it, or can enjoy it.

15. THE Christian hope tends to *purify*, *cleanse* and *sanctify* all who have it, in various ways ; as, (1.) By the objects of it, which are the *pure* and *holy* God, and a state of *pure* and *holy blessedness*. Indeed, none but such as are in some measure purified from their lusts and sins, can entertain or please themselves with such a hope at all : Whence it follows, that no wicked persons ever *had* or *can* have a *true Christian hope*.—(2.) Those who have this hope are purified by the frequent and serious thoughts of God, and heavenly glory. As the object of their hope is spiritual and divine ; so the

frequent contemplation of it purifies and raises their affections from the earth, and transforms them into the same likeness: As the Christian's hope, treasure and heart are in heaven, so it is likely his conversation will be there also.

16. EVERY man will have his hope; but it behoves us to see to it that *our's* is rationally founded, and a true Christian hope, that will attend us to death, and to the gates of heaven.—If it purifies our hearts and quickens our holy diligence, it will never deceive us; but if not it is counterfeit; and, “what will become of the hope of the hypocrite, when God taketh away his soul?”

17. How great will their fall be, who fall from a conceited and imaginary heaven into a real hell? Hope, of all the passions, is the most calm and quiet; but when disappointed, the rage, impatience, sorrow and despair of hell must follow. Let us therefore examine our hopes, lest this should be *our* sad case.

ESSAY XLIV.

The NATURES and PERSON of CHRIST.

1. **A**S Christ is the *end of the law*, the *sum and substance of the gospel*; the *pearl of great price*; the *author, finisher and object of our faith, trust, hope and dependence*; our Redeemer, and through God, our *portion and salvation*, it well becomes us, as Christians, to grow in the knowledge of, and acquaint ourselves well with this glorious person: For, the better we know him in his *natures, person and saving offices*, the more clear and comfortable will be the grounds of our faith and trust in him; the better shall we love him, and the more chearfully shall we follow and obey him.

2. He is, indeed, a most *wonderful and mysterious* person; but the holy scriptures have revealed to us a number of his glories, and given us many rich materials for the growing knowledge of him, and acquaintance with him.

3. He is represented in one view, as the *wonderful counsellor*, the *mighty God*, the *everlasting Father*, the *Prince of peace*; the Word which was in the beginning with God, and which was God; the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, by whom all things are and consist:---And, in another view, he is represented, as the *Son of man*; the *man Jesus*; *born of a virgin*; appearing in the *form of a servant*, and in the *likeness of sinful flesh*; *smitten, wounded and bruised*, a *man of sorrows* and acquainted with grief; *hungering, thirsting, weary, sorrowing, bleeding and dying*; *made of a woman*;

made *under the law*, and the like ;---which plainly proves, that in this mysterious person, there are *two* widely different and distinct *natures* ; not only a *soul* and a *body* as in other human creatures, but a truly *divine* and *human nature* ; by the one of which he is *truly* and *really* God, and by the other *truly* and *really* man.

4. SOME hereticks supposed, that the divine nature of Christ served as a *soul* to his *human body*, and therefore, that he had no human soul, distinct from his *God-head*, or divine nature : but this is an error against scripture, which assures us, that Christ had a *true human soul*, distinct from his divine nature, and that this soul was sorrowful even to death. Now it would be impious to suppose, that the GOD-HEAD or *divine nature* of Christ, *suffered*, or felt any uneasy passion. Besides, unless Christ had had a proper human soul besides his divine nature, as we have, he could not be *truly* and *properly* man, as we are ; and therefore not a proper *Kinsman-Redeemer*.

5. CHRISTIANS are divided about the time of the creation of Christ's human soul : The generality holding that it was created and joined to his body in the virgin's womb. But others, with *Dr. WATTS*, hold, that it was created the first of all creatures ; and that the divine nature of Christ, acting by it, created all other worlds and creatures ; conversed with *Adam* in *paradise* ; was made visible to the *Patriarchs*, and was the grand agent in transacting all the affairs of man's redemption in all ages of the world ; and really descended from heaven, divested of the glory and happiness it had there enjoyed from the beginning, and humbled itself, by entering into the virgin's womb*.

6. THESE *two different natures* are so closely united as to make *one glorious, mysterious person* ; by which means Christ's wonderful humiliation and condescension

* Col. i. 15,---18.

appears in uniting his glorious divine nature to our *mean and frail humanity*; and his wonderful love, in exalting our nature to a personal union with the *Divine*. Yet these two natures do, and must continue *distinctly unblended and unmixed*. By virtue of this wonderful union, the man Jesus is spoken of as *God*, and the *divine word*, which is *God*, is spoken of as *man*.

7. THAT our Lord Jesus Christ *was*, and is possessed of a truly divine nature, or that he is *truly and really* God in one of his natures, appears against *Socinians* and *Arrians*, from the works that he did; the divine names and attributes ascribed to him, and the divine perfections which were displayed in his miracles. As we heard above, he is expressly called *God*; "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." He is said to have been *in the beginning*, that is *eternal*; to have been *before Abraham was*; to have *created and made all things*. He is styled the *Alpha and Omega*, the beginning and the end, the searcher of the hearts and trier of the reins of the children of men. He is *Omnipotent*, for he *raised the dead*; *turned water into wine*; *created bread and fish* in the eater's hands, and *made all things*, visible and invisible. He is *omniscient*, for he *knew the very thoughts* of men. He is *omnipresent*, for although in heaven, he promises to be *where ever two or three of his disciples are*; and to be every where with his servants to the end of the world. He is therefore the *proper object of divine worship*, and accordingly *all the angels of God*, are commanded to *worship him*. *Stephen* worshipped him; *St. Paul* swore by him, and all sinners are commanded to believe in him, to rely and trust on him, and to honour him, even as they honour the Father; therefore he is, in one of his natures, *properly God*.*

* Heb. i. Isa. ix. 6. Col. ii. 9. Rev. i. 8 — ii. 23. — iv. 11. — v. 11, &c.

8. THAT our Lord Jesus Christ was also truly man, is evident, not only from his *conception* and *birth*, and from his being called *the seed of the woman*, the *son of David*, the *man Jesus*, and a *man of sorrows* and acquainted with griefs; but also from every proper character of humanity appearing in him. He *increased in knowledge*, and in *stature*, as other men; he *eat, drank and slept*; was *hungry and weary*; felt all the innocent passions of humanity in all their strength and delicacy; spoke familiarly of his soul and body, his flesh and blood; suffered, and at length bled and died; --- thus giving full proof, that in one of his natures, he was, in all respects, like unto his human brethren (sin only excepted) and therefore well qualified to be a *merciful high-priest*, and *compassionate elder brother*, and *kinsman-redeemer*; the *seed of the woman*, and the *Son of David*, after the flesh.

9. As the human nature of Christ was to be the *propitiary sacrifice* for the sins of the world; therefore, it behoved to be perfectly pure and immaculate, without any taint of *inherent* or *derived* corruption (otherwise it could not have been a sacrifice acceptable to God, nor available for us;) therefore, it pleased God to secure the sinless purity of this nature, by its being conceived and formed by the holy Ghost, in the sanctified womb of a pure virgin. Whence he was called the *holy child Jesus*; the *lamb of God*, "without spot or blemish; "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."

10. THERE is no reason to doubt but that the *human soul* of Christ was the *noblest spirit* which God ever created, and his body the most perfect human body that ever was formed; seeing, that in this *consecrated temple* the DEITY himself was to reside, and "all the fulness of the GOD-HEAD, to dwell bodily." So that there is no doubt but this glorious dignified man, con-

sidered only as a man, *was*, and is the *most glorious creature of God*; and is filled with all the graces and perfections, whereof a limited, created nature is capable; seeing that it was *by* and *through this nature*, that God was to display and manifest himself to men.

11. As the divine nature of Christ was not capable of *suffering*, so neither was it capable of *humiliation, exaltation or reward*. CHRIST's divine nature could not properly be said to humble itself; to empty itself of its glory, or to be rewarded for its services, or exalted to a higher degree of glory, or blessedness, or dominion, than it enjoyed before; therefore, wherever we find these changes of state ascribed to Christ in scripture, we must understand it of his human nature, which indeed humbled itself in the work of our redemption, and has obtained a glorious exaltation and an increase of dignity and blessedness, as the reward of its humiliation, labours and sufferings*.

12. ALTHOUGH there was a perfect union of the *Word or divine nature* of Christ with his human nature, while upon earth; yet the manner and degree in which the divine nature communicated the perfections of power and knowledge to the human nature, is, to us, a great mystery. It appears, that Christ, as a man, grew up from his childhood, and increased in knowledge as other men do: Yet, no sooner does he enter upon his public ministry, having been thereunto set apart by the baptism of *John*, and the anointing of the holy Ghost, but we find him possessed of *amazing, even infinite knowledge and almighty power*. From which it would seem to appear, that during his private life, the divine nature of Christ communicated little else to his human nature, than sanctifying knowledge and holy influences, and that his communications became more

* Phillip. ii. 5;--11. Psal. cx. 7, &c.

unlimited and extensive, as the great work of his ministry required.

13. Such is the *glorious object* of our faith and hope. From which it appears, how worthy he is of, and how justly entitled to our *trust, homage, love and adoration*; For, whatever is amiable, excellent, or a perfection in God and man, he possesses in the most eminent degree. The offices which he sustains and executes, as our Mediator, are to be considered below.



ESSAY XLV.

CHRIST, our PROPHET.

1. **A**LTHOUGH Christ is, in one of his natures, God *equal with the Father*, yet in his complex person, as *GOD-man-Mediator*, he is the *Father's righteous servant*, whom God hath provided, appointed, sanctified and sent into the world, on the great and gracious errand of redeeming lost sinners; fulfilling and honouring his law, and promoting his glory; to whom he hath (for a time at least) entrusted the whole management of his mediatorial kingdom; committed all power and judgment, and made him the head and governor of all things, of all the scenes of providence, all the kingdoms of the world, and all the angels of heaven and devils of hell, of which he is the glorious king and head.

2. IN this his *mysterious, complex person*, as *GOD-man-Mediator*, he more especially sustains and executes three offices for the good of the church, and for the salva-

tion of sinners :---As sinners are naturally *ignorant* and blind in the knowledge of God, and in the way of serving him acceptably, in compassion and relief of this misery of our fallen race, he is become our *prophet* to instruct us :---As they are *guilty* and subject to condemnation and wrath, and have no access to God or power with him; in this our guilty and rebellious state, he is become our *Priest* to atone for our sins by the sacrifice of himself, and to plead, pray and intercede for us with his justly offended Father, and to procure us access to him with humble boldness and favourable acceptance with him :---As we are by nature bond slaves of *satan* and of lust, having numberless enemies which seek our perdition, and neither power nor skill to oppose them, he is graciously become our *King*, not only to give laws to our consciences, but to captivate our hearts to himself; to rule and reign within us by the power of his Spirit, and having thus rescued us from the power of inward enemies, to lead us on to the conquest of the world and the *devil*, with all their stratagems and temptations.

3. THE *prophetic office* consists chiefly of two parts: 1. To reveal, preach, and inculcate those truths and doctrines of God, which are necessary to the salvation of sinners: And, 2. To foretel, with certainty, future events, relative to the church of God, or the members of it, or others, which seemed to depend, for their existence, on uncertain contingencies and events. This was the twofold business of both the *Jewish* and *Christian* prophets; and in the Jewish church, there were certain established marks of trial, whereby the *true* prophets, were distinguished from the *false*. Now, in both these respects, Christ is the *prime* and *chief* prophet of the church; nay, he may be said, by way of eminence, to be the *only true* Prophet of God; because all other

true prophets were only his *organs* or *instruments*, (if I may so speak) deriving all their *revelations*, *predictions*, *gifts* and *graces*, from the light of his Spirit, communicated to them, illuminating, *inspiring* them, and speaking and writing by and in them.

4. WHATEVER revelations, or divine inspirations, *Adam*, *Enoch*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Job*, *David*, or the prophets and the patriarchs of old, were favoured with, or have recorded in the scriptures, for illuminating, converting and building up the church ;---or, if any Heathens of old, *Socrates*, *Heraclitus*, or any of the Heathens at this day, have obtained, or do obtain, any just and spiritual revelations of God or his will, or any supernatural light or assistance, all has proceeded from the Mediator, that fountain of light and grace ; that light of the Gentiles and glory of his people Israel ;---that true light which lighteth every man, that cometh into the world ;---who, having been from eternity in the bosom of the Father, and having learned of him, declareth him to his creatures ;---for none hath thus known the Father, but the Son ; the word and wisdom of God, and him to whom the Son revealeth him. In particular, we are assured, that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God ;" and that the prophets spake in old time, as they were moved by the holy Ghost, which is the Spirit of Jesus.

5. ALTHOUGH the Mediator was *thus* the Prophet of God in all ages ; yet he was more *visibly*, *sensibly* and *solemnly* inaugurated and set apart to his prophetic office, at his baptism by *John*, where, instead of being anointed with oil (a ceremony used of old at the instalment of prophets, as well as of priests and kings) he was anointed with a plentiful effusion of the holy Ghost, with which he was filled without measure ; and all men commanded to hear him, under that character, by

a voice from heaven : which seems a surprising, literal fulfilment of *Moses's* prophesy concerning him*.

6. It may be observed, that Christ, in the course of his ministry, remarkably fulfilled and discharged the two branches of the prophetic office, mentioned above : 1. He revealed the will of God to men for their salvation ; and, 2. He foretold future events.

7. In the first of these branches, Christ the Mediator, reveals the will of God to men, for their salvation, both by his *word outwardly*, and by his *spirit* applying the word to their hearts. In this respect, how far has he the pre-eminence above all other prophets ? Other prophets can only declare God's will to men, from the revelation of Jesus Christ, and after this have no more that they can do, not being able to dispense the quickening Spirit, without which the outward declaration of God's will, is ineffectual to the salvation of sinners : But this divine Prophet is not only the original *revealer* and *declarer* of God's will, but also the *dispenser of the Spirit*, by which he can, when he pleases, reveal God's will inwardly to the hearts and consciences of sinners, and make it operative and effectual there for their salvation.

8. By his personal ministry, and that of his Apostles, he as the Father's righteous servant, has revealed all truth and duty necessary to the salvation of sinners. He expressly declares, that what he spoke and taught was *from the Father*, and not of *his own will*†. He unfolded and cast a new light on the dark prophetic parts of the old Testament, and shewed how all the prophecies and sacrifices there shadowed forth, prefigured and pointed to *himself* and *gospel blessings*, as the *substance*‡. He made those things clear to us, which

* Deut. xviii. 15, &c.

†. John xii. 49.

‡ Luke xxiv. 27.

were not well understood by the prophets who revealed them, by the secret impulses of his Spirit*. He declared the spiritual nature of God, and that worship he requires, and vindicated the *purity, spirituality, and vast extent* of the divine law, from the false glosses, and corrupt interpretations of the Jewish teachers†. He distinctly revealed the way and method of our recovery through himself; gave a clear revelation of a judgment to come, and of an eternal state of rewards and punishments; thus bringing life and immortality to such a clear light by his gospel, as it had never appeared in before, by former divine revelations.

9. As a Prophet, he foretold many future events, (which is deemed the highest proof of the prophetic spirit and character) such as *Peter's* denial of him; the treachery of *Judas*; his *own* sufferings, death, and resurrection; the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the dispersion of the Jews forty years before it happened ‡: The surprizing success and spread of his own gospel §: The sufferings and persecutions of his followers, and the degeneracy and corruption which should prevail among them. And, as all these things have punctually come to pass, we have abundant ground to believe that the prophecies contained in the book of his revelations to his servant *John*, and those prophecies, which by his Spirit, he enabled his other Apostles to utter, concerning the fall of *Antichrist*; the restoration of the *Jews*; the gathering in, and conversion of the Heathen nations; the glory of his church in the latter days, and the final destruction of our earth by fire, will, all of them, be accomplished in due time.

* 1 Pet. ii. 12.

† Math. vi. vii. and viii.

‡ Luke xii. 44. — xxi. 24.

§ Mark xvi. 17, 18.

10. CHRIST also as a Prophet, teaches not only by *outward revelations*, but by the *inward operations* of the Spirit on the souls of men. He not only spake as never man spake; but his words (when he pleases) are *spirit and life*; working powerfully and effectually in them who believe. He opened the heart of *Lydia*, that she attended to the things spoken by *Paul*. He opened the understandings of his disciples, that they might understand the scriptures, and caused their hearts to burn within them, by the sacred energy of his Spirit, while he opened to them the scriptures concerning himself. Thus does he, when he pleases, make the light of his glorious gospel shine upon the hearts of sinners: enlighten, transform, and renew them, and thereby give free course to the word of his grace, and glorify it; And to him we are to look, as our Prophet, for those *inward teachings*, and *effectual illuminations* of his Spirit, to make his word effectual and saving.

11. CHRIST the Mediator was foretold by *Moses*, as a Prophet, like unto himself, to be raised up, to the Jews, from among their brethren, to whom they should hearken without gainsaying or reserve. And the resemblance between HIM and *Moses* is remarkably striking in many respects: (1.) In their birth; they were both *Israelites*; both born in obscurity: (2.) In their early exposure to great *risks, dangers and hardships*: (3.) Both come to *their own* with special commission and miraculous power from God, and their own received them not kindly, but evilly requited them, and perversely rebelled against them: (4.) Both were exceedingly meek in their temper; exposed themselves to much hardship and self-denial in their ministry; were zealous, diligent and faithful in all God's house: shewed great signs and wrought great miracles to confirm their missions: (5.) Both were authors of a

new dispensation of religion, and Mediators between God and *man*: (6.) Both had near access to, and familiar converse with God, and peculiar marks of his favour; and had their revelations immediately from God, and confirmed them with the seal of miracles: (7.) Both fasted forty days: (8.) Both were very zealous for the LORD GOD of *hosts*, and affectionate lovers of an ungrateful people: (9.) Both were *rulers* and *deliverers*, as well as *Prophets*; the one from the captivity of *Pharaoh* and the bondage of *Egypt*; the other from the captivity of the *devil*, and the bondage of their own lusts: (10.) Both chose *seventy disciples*.

12. LET us see to it, that we *hearken to this Prophet*, which speaketh from heaven. Let us hear with submissive attention, both what he speaks to us *outwardly* by his word, and *inwardly* by the voice of his Spirit*.

* Acts iii. 23. Heb. xii. 25. Matth. xvii. 3. Heb. i. 1.

E S S A Y XLVI.

The PRIESTLY OFFICE of CHRIST.

1. **T**HE Aaronical priesthood, was a type of the priesthood of Christ, though the priesthood of *Melchisedec*, was a more perfect one: Consequently, the Jewish high-priests, and *Melchisedec*, were types of Christ.

2. Two qualifications were necessary to the Jewish high-priests; (1.) That they should be of the same nature with their brethren*.---(2.) That they should be solemnly separated and set apart to their office, by the appointment of God, and by consecration or investiture†. Now Christ, the great high-priest of our profession, had both these qualifications‡.

3. As the priest's office, is founded on the fallen state of human nature, and appointed in relief of the guilty, it consists of two parts or branches: (1.) To offer sacrifice: And, (2.) To make intercession.

4. SACRIFICES were of two kinds under the law: Either *eucharistical*, as acknowledgments of mercies; and these were commonly called *gifts*, and were *unbloody*, consisting of the fruits of the earth, &c. Or, they were *expiatory*, or *atonements* for sin, and these were called *sacrifices*, and were always *bloody*; for, without shedding of blood, there was no remission of sins.

5. CHRIST, in this sense, was a *true and real sacrifice*. His soul was made *an offering for sin*. Thus he is called, "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of

* Heb. v. 1, 2.---iv. 15.

† Heb. v. 1,---4.

‡ Heb. ii. 14,---17.---v. 5, 6, 9, 10.

“the world:—Our passover sacrificed for us:—The
 “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world:—The
 “propitiation for our sins, and the sins of the world:
 “—He has offered to bear the sins of many*.”

6. THE entire human nature of Christ was the sacrifice which he offered up for the sins of the world.—He not only gave his *soul* or *life* an offering for sin, but bore our sins in his own body on the tree:—And this sacrifice received its dignity and value from his *divine nature*, which offered the human: For he, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself up without spot unto God†.

7. By this sacrifice has Christ made an atonement for sin; satisfied the demands of divine justice; confirmed and illustrated the truth, holiness and justice of God, and made his law exceeding honourable; purchased our forfeited blessings and lost happiness; opened a way for the mercy of God to all the sinful race of *Adam*; and procured the pardon of sin, the divine favour, the gift of the Spirit, and eternal life for every soul of man who will fall in with his saving design, and take him as their *Prophet* and *King*‡.

8. THE intercessory part of the Priest's office, was to offer up the prayers of the people and to intercede for them. The high-priest entered into the holiest of all on the great day of atonement or expiation, and blessed the people in the name of the Lord; sprinkling the blood of their sacrifices before the mercy-seat. Christ, in like manner, having offered himself a sacrifice of atonement for our sins, hath entered into heaven, in the virtue of his most precious blood, to offer up the prayers of his people, and make intercession for them§.

* Heb. ii. 12, 26.

† Heb. ii. 14.

‡ 1 John i. 7. 1 Tim. ii. 5. Gal. i. 4. Heb. ix. 12,--15.

1 John ii. 1, 2. Numb. vi. 23. Deut. xxi. 5.

§ Heb. ix. 11,--24. Rom. viii. 34. Heb. vii. 25.

9. As Christ was of the tribe of *Judab*, not of *Levi*, from whom the Aaronical priesthood descended, so he is said to be a "Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." The resemblance between the priesthood of Christ and that of *Melchisedec* is remarkable in several cases: (1.) In the ancientness of that order, and *Abraham's* paying tithes to *Melchisedec*, and being blessed by him, although the father of the Aaronical priesthood. (2.) *Melchisedec*, was a priest upon a throne, or a king as well as a priest; so was Christ. (3.) The original and descent of *Melchisedec* was peculiar; so was Christ's: For, who can declare his generation? (4.) The priesthood of *Melchisedec* was not encumbered with such a ritual, and so many ceremonies and carnal commandments and ordinances, as that of *Aaron*; but was more simple and catholic; So is Christ's.

10. THERE are several things in the priesthood of Christ peculiar to itself; as, (1.) He was perfectly sinless, although he transacted with God for sinners. (2.) Other priests offered *brutal sacrifices*, but Christ offered *himself*. He was both the *Priest* and the *sacrifice*. His divine nature was the altar on which he offered up the humanity. (3.) Other priests offered *many sacrifices*, even *daily*; whereas he offered but *one sacrifice* of infinite value and virtue. (4.) Other priests and sacrifices, were ineffectual for expiating or taking away *moral guilt*: They made not him who did the service, or for whom it was done, *perfect* as pertaining to the *conscience*: They only took away the guilt of ceremonial pollutions or omissions: But the sacrifice of Christ takes away the guilt of all sin. This is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

11. THE priesthood of Christ, and his most expensive sacrifice, should put us in mind of our guilty state,

† Heb. vii. 3.

and of the malignant nature of sin ; seeing there could have been no remission of the very smallest sin, without the shedding of the blood of Christ.

12. HENCE we see the wonderful love of God in preparing *such a Priest and sacrifice*, for our guilty race, and not sparing him, but freely giving him up for us all :—As also the amazing condescension and philanthropy of Christ, in becoming a sacrifice and victim for the *ungodly* ; for *sinners* ; for *enemies*.

13. How *freely, cheerfully, and assuredly* should we depend on the merit of such a sacrifice as this ? And how entirely give ourselves over to the guidance of such an high-priest ? How should we reverence him ? And with what humble confidence enter into, and approach the holiest, in the new and living way which he hath consecrated by his blood ? How *compassionate and faithful* is he ? How sensible of our infirmities, and how ready to pity them, and able to help them or remove them ?

14. WHAT encouragement have we to *faith and prayer*, having such an intercessor ? Our prayers are *poor and imperfect* things, but if offered up *by him*, they will *prevail* and be *accepted*. How happy also are all those ; for whom he *intercedes* ? They must be safe and happy ; for God ever hears his beloved Son : “ But *“I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.”* Happy *Peter* ! and equally happy and safe all for whom Christ *intercedes* * !

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* Heb. x. 19,—26.

E S S A Y XLVII.

The KINGLY, or REGAL OFFICE of CHRIST.

1. **K**ING is a *relative term*, and supposes *subjects* and a *kingdom*. Christ's kingdom is two-fold; either *natural*, founded in his eternal DEITY and GOD-HEAD; or *mediatorial*, given to him of the Father by commission*.

2. THE subjects of king Jesus are, either his *friends* or his *enemies*. All were indeed, at first his enemies; but many are made willing subjects in the day of his power; and those that continue enemies, shall be broken to pieces with a rod of iron.

3. IN considering those whom he subdues, and the kingly power he exercises over them both in subduing and ruling them, the following things may be observed: (1.) ALL are at first of *satan's kingdom*; *children of wrath*; they *serve divers lusts*, and walk according to the course of this world, often indeed, they meet with checks of conscience; make resolutions; seem inclinable to submit to his government, and say, "I go, sir—but go not;" the love of sin still prevailing and rendering them children of disobedience.—(2.) CHRIST gives them to understand, that they are rebels, and that if they persist they must inevitably perish†.—(3.) He makes a proclamation of mercy and pardon to them if they return and submit; both by his word and Spirit‡.—(4.) He shews them by his word and by his Spirit, that it is both their *duty* and *interest* to submit

* Psal. ii. 6. Isa. ix. 6, 7. Dan. vii. 13, 14.

† Job ix. 4. Luke xiii. 3.—xix. 27.

‡ John vi. 37. Rev. iii. 20, 21.

to him as their rightful Lord and Sovereign; and that in vain they expect the benefits of his *priestly office*, if they submit not to him as a *king**.---(5.) He convinces them of the infinite advantage resulting to them from an entire subjection to his laws and government; That they shall be pardoned;---received into favour;---made kings and priests to God;---kept from falling; and presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.---(6.) He gives them the laws of his kingdom;---shews them the duties they must perform, and the sins they must watch against; that they must be *diligent*,---*zealous*,---*servent* and *persevering*; that they must wait upon him, and not draw back by apostacy. And, (7.) He holds out both the *crown* and the *cross*: He shews them what they may expect to *lose* and *suffer* in his service; that they must be willing to part with, and forego all things for the crown of glory in reversion; that they must be willing to deny themselves; to be hated of all men, and to lose life itself in his cause and in fidelity to him.

4. WHEN sinners become the subjects of Christ, they cast themselves at his feet,---not desiring to capitulate or stand on terms; but give him (as a victorious prince) a *blank paper* to make his own terms; resolved, cheerfully and without reserve, to subscribe them. And this subjection is accompanied with the greatest love to, and desire after Christ,---his *person* and *service*, as well as his *rewards*; with a consent to be the Lord's to all intents and purposes,---both to *serve*, to *suffer for*, and to *enjoy* him. It is accompanied with a firm reliance and dependance on him, for all needed grace and help to fulfil their duties and obligations;---with resolutions of a perpetual and unremitting warfare against all his enemies; and with zealous endeavours to pro-

* Psal. xlv. 11, &c.

note the interests of his kingdom, and gather subjects to it.

5. AFTER the subjection of sinners to Christ, he rules him *in love*; gives them needed succours and comforts in his service; ---corrects them for their sins; ---supports them under temptations and sufferings; ---helps them to conquer their enemies, and leads them on to triumph and a crown.

6. In his government of enemies, he sets bounds to their power, malice and wickedness; ---he turns the evil designed by them, into good; and in the end, he will exercise kingly power and authority over them, in taking vengeance on all that have continued incorrigible.

LASTLY, Christ hath exercised his kingly office in all ages of the world and church; but he will shew it more gloriously in the latter days, when the world will be full of his dutiful subjects.

E S S A Y XLVIII.

The due IMPROVEMENT of TIME.

WHEN we shall have considered the shortness of time; its vast importance, and pointed out the best methods of redeeming and improving it, we shall have exhausted this subject.

I. THE shortness of time, both *absolutely* and *relative*-ly considered, is so very obvious to persons who are the least capable of reflection and observation, that little need be said of it: For, (1.) How small a thing is the aggregate of time, making one total sum of all its distinctive periods, from the first birth of created things, to the final dissolution of this world and the present scene, and till time shall be computed no more? A few thousands of fleeting years will sum it all. Yet a little while, and the mighty angel shall lift up his hand to heaven, and swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, that *time shall be no more*. (2.) If we consider time as *relative to us*, or the *measure of our duration*; what a *span*, what an *hand-breadth*, what a *cypher* is it? How quickly are our years gone, as a tale that is told? A *day*, how quickly is it gone; and yet how few are the days of the years of our lives? That mighty thing a *year*, which looks so large and extensive before us, how swiftly does it pass, and how short and trifling does it look in retrospect? Yet how few are the years of most lives?—How quickly does a clock tell a *second*? While we pronounce the word, it is expired? Yet a short row of figures in *seconds*, makes the sum of a long life. When we see the heap of sand in the upper lobe of an

hour-glass, and mark how slow it wastes, by running into the lower; we are apt to say, surely this will be long in expending; yet within the short compass of an hour, all is fallen! Just such is the life of man. Look forward upon fifty or sixty years, it seems an immense heap of time; but the fleeting transient minutes quickly run it out, and bring it to a period. (3.) How comparatively small is the period of most human lives? It is supposed, that not every tenth person reaches the age of thirty years. The two thirds of our species die in infancy, and these are happy? But from that age up, in which all are moral agents, and accountable for their actions, how many graves do we find of every length? How many die of every age? The thread of time (short at the very longest) is suddenly, and alas! *unexpectedly* cut off, and they drop into their graves, like unripe fruit.

2. THE necessity of improving time, will appear not only from the *shortness of its duration*, but from its *vast importance*. (1.) Time is our *only opportunity* both for doing and receiving good, as *accountable creatures*. Opportunity is absolutely necessary to the accomplishment of every great and good design. If we had all the *will* and all the *power* in the world, to do good for ourselves or others; yet without opportunity, we can do nothing. The being that never existed, (if such an *ideal being* is fairly supposable) could never have any capacity or opportunity, either of enjoying or communicating good. The being which exists but a short time, though it may have the noblest capacities for doing and receiving good, yet *its opportunity* is only at *its time*. It is owing to the infinite goodness of God, that he ever created any being at all, or gave unto them capacities and opportunity of giving and enjoying good. The simple existence of every living creature

which God hath made, is an intentional favour and mercy to that creature; for, to *exist*, is to be in a capacity for happiness. It is better even for *ants* and the most *trifling insects to be*, than *not to be*; for, even their short and insignificant duration, is filled with a happiness suitable to their nature. But, where *sense*, *reason* and *immortality* are superadded, to such beings, the intentional goodness of God is even infinitely greater; because, to such beings, God hath not only given nobler capacities of communicating and receiving a higher and more sublime happiness, but hath also given them an opportunity of enjoying this happiness, eternally! O, then, under what high obligations are *men*, are *human creatures*, to God, even for his creating goodness, who hath taught them more than the beasts of the field, made them wiser than the fowls of heaven, stamped upon their nature the image of his own immortality, and made them capable of eternally enjoying the *chief good*? But, (2.) We must consider that the *only opportunity* which we have of ensuring the eternal enjoyment of the chief good of our natures, is our *present, scanty, uncertain span of time*. When the curtain of time falls, all opportunity ceases of either *doing* or *receiving* that good, which will be eternal in its fruits, consequences and rewards: For, when the night of death cometh, no man can work the rewardable works of God; there is no knowledge, device or repentance in the grave. The reason is, because we are probationary creatures, and our present precarious existence, is the only time of our trial. Hence it appears, how *all-important* time is to us, as our *eternal all* depends on the manner in which we improve our short allotment of it. It is our seed time for eternity. It is our working, labouring day, wherein we are to lay up in store a good foundation for the time to come. It is our only opportunity of providing for, and ensuring a blessed immortality. (3.) Hence it will follow,

that as this is the talent which gives worth to all other talents, every day or hour of it abused, or not used in subserviency to our eternal interests, though it may not totally deprive us of *eternal happiness itself*, yet it will certainly lessen the *degree of that happiness*. He who, with *one pound*, gained *ten*, was made ruler over *ten cities*; and he who gained but *two*, was made ruler only over *two cities*. A plain proof, that a vigorous improvement of *this*, and every other talent, will be proportionably rewarded; and that the more slothful and idle servant (though he may not be altogether unfaithful) will fall short of the reward which he might have obtained by diligence and circumspection.

3. As to the best methods of *redeeming and improving* time, the following may be worthy our attention:

(1.) An habitual daily consideration of, and attention to the great importance of it, as it stands connected with our eternal interests.

(2.) Daily serious reflections on its *exceeding shortness* and *uncertainty*, and how quickly our day of probation may be at an end. And this will naturally lead us,

(3.) To consider the greatness of the work we have to do in this our day, and how dreadful the consequences will be to us, if we should leave it unfinished.

(4.) Most will find it worth their serious enquiry, whether they have ever, to this day, considered for what purpose they have had *time*, and been sent into this world; and whether they are not yet to learn the very meaning of the *improvement of time*.

(5.) PERSONS who have a due sense of the importance and value of time, will employ as little of it as possible in *absolute idleness*; or, which is the same thing, in busying themselves in matters, which contribute nothing to their own advantage, or that of other persons, much less in mischief.

(6.) TIME employed in worldly business and cares, is not always *misspent* or *thrown away*; for, while we have bodies, families, and the poor and needy to care for, lawful worldly industry, will ever be an essential part of our Christian duty. But that the time spent in worldly business be *lawfully spent*, it is necessary that we thus spend it in subserviency to a higher, nobler end; that we do it to the glory of God, and in obedience to his command; and that the world is kept down from the highest place in our affections.

(7.) ALL time spent in diversions and amusements is not lost or squandered; for, it is needful, that the mind be unbent and the spirits refreshed, in order to fit both for more important duty. But diversions should never exceed this measure. A person who is running for a rich prize, should not stop and turn aside to catch butterflies.

(8.) WHERE persons are conscious, that they have trifled away the prime of life in *idleness*, *dissipation*, and *pleasure*, and in a wretched unconcern about their highest interests, it becomes them to be more frugal and parsimonious of time than others;---*first*, because much of it is already guiltily squandered and lost, and in all probability little remains,---and *secondly*, because they have peculiar need to redeem their time by a double diligence in well doing, that, if possible, they may make some amends for former trifling.

(9.) A RIGHT *contrivance* and *planning* of business, would be an excellent expedient for the better improvement of time:---So much of every day to the duties of religion;---to the improvement of the mind;---to worldly cares and labours;---to company;---diversion, &c.

(10.) DILIGENCE and *dispatch* in business, is absolutely necessary to make the best of time.

E S S A Y XLIX.

The CONSIDERATION of ETERNITY.

1. **E**TERNITY, what a vast, amazing, unsathomable, incomprehensible subject! It is the existence and duration of him, who is incomprehensible to all but himself!—As we quickly lose all our ideas in considering immensity, or infinite space;—so we are equally lost in considering eternity, or infinite duration; and no wonder, since they are in some sort attributes of the incomprehensible JEHOVAH, which none by searching can find out unto perfection!

2. THE word *aion*, which we English *eternity*, signifies perpetual existence; and since we are finite creatures, it is little wonder, that we should be incapable of forming any adequate conception of it: For, it is not to be supposed, that a being who has begun to exist, should be able to conceive the nature of a being who is self-existent, and never had a beginning of existence.

3. ETERNITY is generally distinguished into two periods (if one may be allowed so to express it,) the first, is the eternity of duration which is *past*, and which can be attributed only to GOD, who alone possesses it all. The second, is that eternity of duration which flows on endlessly from any given period of time. This last eternity is not peculiar to GOD, but is attributed also to all immortal creatures, such as *angels, men and devils*; who, though they have begun to exist, yet never shall cease to be.

4. THIS last eternity, I mean the eternity of creatures, is not necessary like the duration of GOD's existence; but wholly depending on the power and will of GOD, who has been pleased to form some of his crea-

tures, for an existence co-eval with himself; *i. e.* to *will* and *cause* their duration to be *eternal*.

5. How wonderful a being is *that* God, who is eternal in his duration, and immensely unlimited in his existence! His *duration* and his *being* admit of no limits, and therefore admit of no kind of comparison with the *existence* or *duration* of any created being.

6. How entirely are we dependent on God, from whose *necessary existence*, we have borrowed our *limited existence*; and by the very power of whose will, we continue to exist every moment?

7. *THOUGH absolute eternity* belongs only to God, yet as we share in all that eternity which is before us, and must be happy or miserable through this endless duration, according as we spend our present time; it follows that we shall live here below, with a constant habitual view and regard to our eternal existence and duration.

8. *THIS* will enable us upon all occasions to form a proper estimate of things. For, if any *temporary* or *momentary* pleasures, honours or gains, which would rob us of eternal happiness, should solicit our attention or pursuit, they ought, at all events, to be forborne and rejected. — And if any *temporary* sufferings or self-denials, which are necessary to our eternal happiness, should fall in our way, they should at all adventures, be endured rather than we should run the risk of suffering eternal torments: For, whatever of joy or pain is *temporary*, bears proportion to that which is *eternal*. And it is a maxim of eternal reason, that lesser inconveniences ought always to be preferred to greater; and that to *sell eternal happiness* for the pleasures of a *moment*, yea, of *ten millions of years*, argues desperate folly.

The order and regulation of families, in their families, should not be more numerous than is necessary. They need not be so, though the multiplicity of them, and their necessity should be made apparent, that they may be enforced with firm-

THE DUTY OF MASTERS OF FAMILIES.

MASTERS of families are pretty universally allowed to sustain the offices of *prophets*, *princes* and *kings* in their own families, and if we borrow our ideas of the number and importance of the duties they owe to their families, from the sustaining *these* offices, their duty, in this relation, will appear very weighty and important indeed.

1. It is the business of a *prophet* to *instruct*; it is therefore the business of masters of families, to instruct their families, not only in the maxims of prudential wisdom, but more especially in the doctrines and duties of religion.

2. It will not excuse parents in the neglect of this duty, that they are *ignorant* themselves. They ought to *learn* and get knowledge for this very purpose. And there are few, but if they take due pains, may acquire knowledge enough, to give *good, wholesome and necessary* instructions to their households.

3. *Ignorant* and unlearned parents should be the more conscientious in providing proper instructors for their families.

4. *PARENTS* may instruct their families very usefully and effectually by setting before them blameless, virtuous and religious examples; and the best instructions without this, will be very *ineffectual*, if not *pernicious*.

5. If it is the duty of *kings* to give good laws, and to preserve good order among their subjects; masters of families are obliged to do this in their families.

6. THE orders and regulations of masters of families, in their families, should not be more numerous than is necessary, lest they be neglected or forgotten through the multiplicity of them; and their necessity should be made apparent, that they may be enforced with firmness and resolution.

7. In the government of a family (a society often made up of persons of very different tempers and dispositions) great prudence, skill and attention are needful, and above all, the divine counsel and assistance.

8. It appears to be of ill consequence for the ruler of a family, to give way to the petulency or unreasonable humours of a capricious domestic, as this would be implicitly giving up his prerogative, and fostering ill humours, and rebellious, lawless dispositions in the subject. It belongs to Christian prudence to determine when this rule ought to be dispensed with, in order to prevent greater evils.

9. LENITY, *compassion and mercy*, should be tempered with *firmness, steadiness and resolution*, in him who would govern a family well. Tyranny in little domestic societies, is odious; and too much lenity may produce great evils.

10. BODILY punishment should be the last expedient used to reform or correct a domestic offender, and prudence alone can point out the proper time and place for this.

11. THE good example of a king is equally binding with his laws, and far more encouraging and alluring; so it is in the master of a family.

12. THE chief duties of a *priest*, are *sacrifice and intercession*. This points out the obligation of *prayer*, as a duty incumbent on all masters of families, in their own families.

13. CHRISTIAN masters of families who neglect this duty *habitually*, act worse than the heathens did, who daily offered prayers and sacrifices to their gods.

14. If *family prayer* and *instruction* are duties incumbent on all Christian masters of families, which they indispensably owe to God, and to the souls of their children and other domestics; and if the *morning* and *evening* are the proper seasons pointed out for the profitable performance of this duty; then the masters of families who, for ordinary, or very often, spend their mornings and evenings abroad from their families, are not in the way of their Christian duty, and their families do probably lose more by this absence and neglect, than they can gain by the cares and worldly labours of the day.

E S S A Y L I.

How CHRISTIANS may and ought to resist TEMPTATIONS, and make them turn out to the BENEFIT of themselves and others.

1. **A**S we are, by nature, and by the prevailing influence of evil example, exceeding prone to sin; and as temptations to it are scattered thick in our way, so to resist temptations to evil, is certainly the most *important* and *difficult* part of our Christian duty and warfare.

2. THE difficulty of our resisting a temptation, is in proportion to our natural or habitual proneness to the particular sin to which we are tempted, and the strength or weakness of our virtue or grace, taken together.

3. A PERSON who has been, by *nature* and *custom*, and may still be by *constitution*, exceeding prone to some particular sin; yet, by improvement in virtue and strength of grace, may much more easily resist a temptation to that particular sin, than another person of weaker grace and feebler virtue, who is, and has been naturally and constitutionally less inclined to that sin.

4. SOME very vicious and wicked persons, have little inclination to some certain sins, and therefore are in less danger of being tempted to commit them than others of much better dispositions upon the whole; yet whose unhappiness it is, to be naturally prone to those sins, and easily drawn into them.

5. **WORLDLY-MINDED**, *covetous* persons, are not easily tempted to the sins of idleness, gaming, squandering or luxury, and but seldom have any strong pro-

penfity to carnal, fenfual indulgences, or the fins of the flefh; becaufe, all thefe oppofe and tend to deftroy their ruling paffion, which is the love and purfuit of gain. But they are prone to the fins of lying for gain, of cheating, over-reaching, injuftice, ufury, cruelty, oppreffion, and immoderate worldly cares, hazards and toils; and againft thefe their ftrongeft watch and guard fhould be placed: For, it is but a vain and empty boaft, for a covetous man to fay, 'I am no gamefter, prodigal, or fpendthrift; no careless, flothful man.' The world knows he is not, cannot be fuch, in confiftence with his ruling paffion; and that care, diligence and frugality in him, are only minifters and hand-maids of his capital vice.

6. *ANGRY, envious, malicious, revengeful perfons*; alfo, *vain, boafter, ambitious men*, are feldom prone to the fins of the flefh, or the foft, focial, effeminate vices. This is not the complexion of their nature, or the caufe of their corruption. Their ruling paffion leads them to other objects, and renders them an eafy prey to a different fet of temptations. Therefore it is little virtue in them, to be free from a fet of fins, to which they have naturally fo little propenfity.

7. *THOSE* who are extremely addicted to the fins of the flefh, are often free from the fins of *pride, vanity, ambition, malice, covetoufnefs and revenge*;—not becaufe they are *virtuous*, but becaufe they have no ftrong bias towards thefe fins, and becaufe the current of their corruptions hurries them another way, and leads them to different objects. It would therefore be an empty boaft in *ſuch a perſon*, to fay, 'I am juſt in my commercial dealings, eaſy in my temper, affable in my deportment, kind, charitable, and good natured to all,'—becaufe the oppoſite fins do not claſh or interfere with his ruling paſſion.

8. *THE first rule* for resisting temptations, is to be perfectly acquainted with our *ruling passion*, and our strongest propensities to vice; -- or in the more nervous language of scripture, *To know every man, the plague of his own heart*; the sin which does most easily beset him; his *bosom sin*, his *beloved lust*. Every man has some sinful passion or propensity which predominates above the rest. And to know this sin, is to have discovered our greatest enemy, and our greatest weakness.

THE second rule is, to set the strongest guard upon the weakest avenue of our soul, and against our most powerful enemy.

THE third rule is, to hold no deliberate parley with this prevailing lust, nor ever to spare or give it quarter, when it makes its assaults, however artfully.

THE fourth rule is, to shun those thoughts, companies and amusements, which we have found by experience, to prove fuel to the sins which most easily beset us.

THE fifth rule is, to pray and strive in a special manner against these particular sins.

THE sixth rule is, to consider the danger of falling under the power of these enemies, and the difficulty of recovering. To all these may be added, a

SEVENTH prudential maxim, namely, to keep ourselves diligently employed in some honest calling or business, which is a very powerful preservative against temptation, as it cuts off those occasions and opportunities which minister to it.

9. TEMPTATIONS may turn to the advantage of those who resist them many ways:

(1.) As conquest over them is a proof of grace, and ground of joy.

(2.) As every conquest of this kind strengthens the habit of virtue; gives courage and magnanimity to the

soul, and renders future victories over the same enemy more easy.

(3.) As it renders those who have thus conquered, the better qualified to advise and succour those that are tempted, and gives them a better right to do so.

(4.) As it shews us experimentally the power put into our hands to conquer other temptations, and tends to humble and give us remorse for not having availed ourselves of this power upon former occasions.

(5.) As it tends to beget gratitude in us towards that Being, by whose grace alone we are enabled to conquer any temptation; and teaches us *on whom* to rely, and *whence* to draw our succours, in future trials. And,

(6.) As it is beating the devil in the field of battle, depriving him of a triumph, and discouraging him from farther attempts upon us.

10. We may make the resisting of temptations useful to others, in various ways; As, (1.) If we are solicited by any particular person to sin, to resist his solicitation, may be a means of reforming him. (2.) On some occasions it may be lawful and useful to encourage and support the tottering virtue of others, by informing them of our success; or by relating it under the fictitious name of some third person: As, 'I have known a person, who was thus tempted, and thus resisted.' (3.) If the temptation is of a *public kind*, he who resists it, preaches a loud sermon against vice; and it is much if some one or more, in company, are not benefited by it. (4.) If none for the present are bettered by such a public testimony against vice, yet it must leave the guilty, under such a conviction of the power and merit of virtue, as may some time or other prevail.

ESSAY LII.

PUBLIC SPIRIT.

1. **PUBLIC Spirit** is a *generosity of temper*, arising from the principle of universal benevolence, and is directly opposed to a *narrow, selfish, contracted temper*, which seeks only its own private interests, pleasure and advantage.

2. A **TRULY public spirited person**, does not, indeed, neglect himself as an individual, nor his family, as parts of himself; but he does not live for himself or his family alone; his generous heart deviseth liberal things, and takes pleasure in forming schemes and projects for the good of mankind, with whose interest he feels his own interest to be closely and inseparably connected. On the contrary, a *selfish person*, destitute of the virtue of public spirit, has his eye chiefly fixed on that dear idol *himself* (of which he considers his family as a part.) All his schemes and projects terminate there, and he takes little or no pleasure in any advantage, or honour, but what comes in to this dear idol.

3. **WHATEVER** promotes the public honor or good; whatever scheme *brings or offers* benefit to one's country, or tends to promote its credit and reputation among strangers, gives a peculiar pleasure to the public spirited person, and he is ready to encourage, support and assist it, to the utmost of his power. If he has not the talent of projecting such schemes himself, he readily falls in with them when proposed, and is so far from needing to be prompted to join in them, that he rejoices in having an opportunity of *doing public good*.

which is his favorite ruling passion. And if he can do but little himself in gratifying so benevolent a passion, he labours to encourage others, who are better able. On the contrary, the *selfish man* has a thousand prudential reasons against consenting to a scheme which might cost him something: 'It will beggar the public, it will oppress the poor; it is impracticable; or it will never answer the end proposed.'—If he is out-voted by a majority, he consents with reluctance, and is for bringing the terms of expence as low as possible, always having an eye to *self*.—If for shame he is obliged to contribute, the hesitating manner in which he does it, or the boasts he makes of it, give plain evidence that he did it unwillingly.—If the scheme miscarries, or does not answer the intention, he reproaches and abuses the projectors, and makes this an argument against all future public spirited projects.

4. A TRULY public spirited person has a real, sensible pleasure in the prosperity and success of his neighbours, and heartily feels for their adversity and ill fortune. It would give his generous benevolent heart a refined pleasure to see all prosperous, all rich, all healthy, all happy, all honoured and esteemed:—And when he sees the reverse, he feels for the calamity of his neighbours, and is himself the less happy amidst his own health, honour, success and abundance. On the contrary, the *selfish man* has an *unfeeling heart* towards his neighbour:—Is he happy and prosperous himself? He hugs and blesses himself in his good fortune! He sacrifices to his own net, and burns incense to his own dreg. He imputes it to his own industry, diligence, honesty or integrity, and has no pity for his neighbour's misfortunes which, according to him, are all owing to some neglect or misconduct on his part. In short, he feels only for himself, unaffected either with hearty joy or grief for the good or bad fortune of others.

6. THE public spirit of a place may be pretty certainly inferred, from the monuments of it in that place. Do we see in a nation or in a neighbourhood, *learning, arts and sciences encouraged and flourishing; rich and stately churches; charity foundations for educating the poor, and healing the sick; the public roads in good repair and the like;* it may be depended on, that public spirit prevails in such places. On the contrary, where *public works and public charities* are neglected in places, otherwise rich and opulent, and where private property abounds, it may be depended on, that *there a selfish spirit and narrow, contracted principles prevail.*

7. PUBLIC spirit was cultivated and cherished with the greatest care amongst the ancient Romans, and had wonderful effects in *that commonwealth.* It seems now to prevail much in *Great-Britain* and the *British colonies.* Wherever *true learning and noble sentiments of liberty* prevail, it flourishes. Under the contrary circumstances, it is *starved and perishes.* It is at a low ebb among these Islands, a few only excepted.

8. PUBLIC spirit is a *shining and useful virtue:* (1.) It is the offspring of universal charity and benevolence. (2.) It is the brightest resemblance of God and his blessed Son. (3.) It is the certain mark of a *broad, enlarged, benevolent soul.* (4.) It is the parent of *noble, generous and useful actions.* And therefore, (5.) It is the source of the truest and most refined delight and pleasure to those who are possessed of it.

9. THE Apostles of Christ, and those of their successors who propagated the gospel in foreign nations, at the expence of every thing dear and comfortable in nature, gave proof of the highest and noblest public spiritedness.

10. NEXT to these, those who charitably contribute to the propagation of the gospel, stand foremost in the catalogue of the public spirited.

10. THE Christian religion lays down the finest and noblest rules, and the strongest motives for public spirit; and indeed, a selfish man cannot be a true Christian.

11. SELFISHNESS is the most despicable of all human vices.



ESSAY LIII.

A proper TEMPER and CONDUCT towards ENEMIES.

1. OUR blessed Saviour has laid down an express precept to his disciples, which *states and limits* their duties towards enemies: "But I say unto you, *love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.*" Matth. v. 44. He hath also enforced this precept, by giving the highest example of obedience to it, in his own conduct. Yet there is no precept of the gospel, the equity of which has been more disputed than this, and the impossibility of obedience to it, more stiffly and publicly asserted.

2. THE reason of the great reluctance of men's minds against this precept, seems to be this, that malice and revenge are the most radical parts of the devil's image remaining in the minds of men, through their apostacy and the corruption of their nature; and these together with *mistaken notions of self-preservation*, and *immoderate self-love*, disposed men to imagine, that to love an enemy is *impossible*, and to hate him is *just*.

3. But when we speak of the duty of loving enemies we must carefully distinguish between the love of approbation and esteem, and the love of benevolence or good-will. As to the former, we cannot have it for the one who does not appear amiable to our understanding, even to a child ;---but the latter we owe, and ought to pay to all men. A parent for instance, is far from approving a *stubborn, refractory, immoral child*; yet his love of benevolence and good will, should continue in its full force and efficacy. "God hateth the workers of iniquity, and is angry with the wicked every day:" He cannot therefore love them with a love of esteem and complacency; yet is he good and kind to the evil and *unthankful*; and with such a love of benevolence and beneficence did he love this *sinful inimical world*, as to give his only begotten Son to it, "that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life". Christ could not surely love with esteem and complacency the inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, who killed and stoned the prophets, and were then plotting against his own life without a cause: Yet how warmly does he express his love of benevolence and beneficence to them, and even prays for his own murderers†.

4. THE extent and degree of the duties of benevolence and beneficence, either to friends or enemies, is various, according to merit, circumstances, or relation. The general scripture rule is, "To do good to all:"—The restriction is, *to some more than to others*, according to a variety of circumstances and considerations.—A good maxim in this case, is, to prefer compassion to an enemy, before a matter of mere generosity to a friend, when we cannot exercise both together.

* Matth. v. 45. John iii. 16.

† Matth. xxiii. 37. Luke xix. 41, 42,——xxiii. 24.

5. NEITHER reason nor scripture requires any acts of kindness to our enemy, which are evidently prejudicial to our own interest, or which might give him an advantage over us.

6. We should *forgive*, and *do good* to enemies, after the example of God and his Son*.

7. We should forgive them, and consequently do them good, as it is the necessary condition of our forgiveness from God†.

8. By forgiving and doing good to our enemy, we heap coals of fire upon his head, and take the most effectual method of recovering and securing his friendship, from the most winning and engaging motives.

* Rom. v. 6,—10. 1 John iv. 10.

† Matth. vi. 12, 14, 15.—xviii. 21, 35. Mark xi. 25, 26. Luke vi. 37.—xxiii. 34.

E S S A Y LIV.

TEMPTATIONS *arising from Company.*

1. **I**T is generally allowed, that we take in most temptations by the ear, or by the sense of hearing; and if so, we are exposed to numberless temptations in company: Especially, if we consider, that the eye comes in, in aid of the ear, and often helps on these temptations.

2. THIS is occasioned by the universal corruption and degeneracy of human nature, and by the consequent carnal, earthly, impure nature of the passions and affections, and the ungovernable licentiousness of the tongue which is actuated by those inward, irregular and impure movements of the soul. Human society, in its present state, may be compared to a *Hospital*, where all are weak and diseased, and where, by a spreading contagion, every one more or less infects another, and increases his weakness and disorder: So, that every member of it, is more or less infected and contaminated by others. No two can associate together, who are in a state of perfect health and soundness.

3. UPON the whole, the *wiser and more virtuous* our company is, the less will we be exposed to temptations of any kind;---and it may happen, that in many occasional interviews with wise and virtuous persons, all may, upon the whole, be made better.---This effect might be expected from religious societies and conferences, were they rightly conducted.---But we now chiefly mean, the *common and occasional* interviews of mankind with each other, at *entertainments, compliments*

tal visits, parties of pleasure, accidental or occasional rendezvous, and the like, to which we are said to resort for the sake of company.

4. ONE of the first temptations arising from company, which we shall mention, is to *error*. It is scarce possible to spend an hour in any company where *religion, morality, or matters of human prudence* are the topics, but some pernicious *error* is broached and maintained by some, and imbibed and embraced by others. *False maxims* are so exceeding common in the world, and so universally espoused, and adhered to by the multitude, that it is scarce possible to steer clear of them in any company; and many of them seem, at first sight, so plausible, as well as recommended by general practice, that the weak and inconsiderate readily swallow them, and he must be a resolute person indeed, who will dare to controvert them:---For instance,---‘That it is lawful to hate and persecute our enemy, and take private revenge. That a man is to study his own ease, pleasure and interest, and the like.’ These errors, though they may seem at first sight of little consequence, yet lead men to the most pernicious and immoral practices, and confirm them in them.

5. COMPANY tempts to *levity*. In the gaiety of conversation we are often led insensibly away from that sobriety and temperance of mind (if we may so speak) which always becomes creatures in our circumstances. *Puns, flashes of wit, humour, and a thousand hints* started in almost every mixed company, *intoxicate and inebriate* the mind, and render it *volatile and unguarded*. And this is most commonly the case, where *good nature* prevails, and *good cheer* abounds; where the minds of all are opened by mutual love and good cheer, and under no restraint or reserve. Persons in

this situation are often so far hurried off their guard, as to violate the laws of good morals, either by bearing too hard upon the weakness or good nature of some person in company;---by exposing or ridiculing some absent person, or by smutty jests and double *entendres*, offensive to the modest ear, and prejudicial to all.--- And when these come also to be aided by *immodest looks*, or *gestures*, and so, to poison the eye, as well as the ear,--- morality must receive a dangerous wound, and corruption be propagated.

6. COMPANY tempts to *profanity*. It is very seldom, that matters of religion are conversed of in company with *that decency and discretion* which becomes such subjects. Scripture is often quoted with a *levity* and *indiscretion*, which betrays a great irreverence for it. The great doctrines of religion are disputed and controverted, with an angry warmth, or a flippant lightness, which tends to discredit them both in our own minds, and in the minds of others. The names of GOD and CHRIST, *heaven* and *hell*, *salvation* and *damnation*, are bandied about as the meekest trifles. Disrespectful and unbelieving hints are often uttered, in the heat of passion and discontent, against doctrines or duties, which we do not like, and which cross the grain of our corrupt nature: All which tend to destroy our reverence for holy things, and erase the very foundations of practical seriousness and piety.

7. We do not now speak of those companies and societies where *profanity*, and *irreligion* are the professed topics of conversation; nor of those schools of debauchery and sensuality, where persons meet for the purposes of *drunkenness* and *lewdness*. At such places persons seek temptations, and not temptations persons. But we speak of those *social meetings*, which are deemed *innocent, diverting, and even improving*, and of the

temptations there to be met with, and guarded against.

8. COMPANY tempts to a sinful mispense of time, in idle and unprofitable discourse. The danger of company would be still less than it is, if the conversation could be confined to something *rational* and *profitable* of any kind, though it did not turn much on matters of morality or religion;---such as *history*, *geography*, the *laws and customs of nations*, the *improvement of trade*, *husbandry*, *navigation*, and the other *arts and sciences*. But to the scandal of most companies, the conversation generally turns upon *mere nonsensical bagatelles*; degenerates into *empty chat* upon the veriest trifles, where the hearers have a chance to learn nothing but the most impertinent nonsense, and where the speakers must run into the same insipid nonsense, if they would be heard. Thus, much precious time is often thrown away in *those idle words*, for which men must give a serious account at the last day;---that foolish talking and jesting which is not convenient, by which guilt is contracted, and a habit of trifling acquired.

9. BACKBITING, *calumny* and *detraction*, are other temptations frequently met with in company. It is of the nature of human corruption, that it drives men from one extreme to another. If companies are not betrayed into the *social and good-natured vices* of *levity*, *dissipation*, and *intemperate gaiety*; or sunk into the *swinish vices* of *debauchery*, *drunkenness* and *lewdness*; or carried away by *impiety* and *profanity*;---they are too generally engaged in the dirty work of *calumny* and *detraction*. The foibles and weaknesses of absent persons, are put in the most ridiculous light, and their persons exposed to contempt;---or their failings are criticised and magnified, and their characters maliciously torn to pieces. And while appeals are every moment made to you for the

truth and *justice* of these slanders, you are put to the sad necessity, either of quarrelling for your absent friend—or, which is far more common, of hearing him traduced in silence, and perhaps, through a weak complaisance, joining issue with the slanderer, and granting things to the disadvantage of an innocent, injured person, which your conscience does not approve.

10. THE best methods of shunning the temptations arising from company, are, (1.) For ordinary to frequent and associate with the best companies: For, man being a social creature, cannot well be wholly without company.—(2.) When we accidentally or on business fall into company of a worse kind, to endeavour as far as our influence will reach, to give the conversation a profitable, or, at least, an innocent turn and direction.—(3.) Where we cannot do this, to be on our guard against unworthy compliances, and to discountenance, as far as we can, trifling, profanity and immorality.—(4.) If we find ourselves unable to do this, and that we are in danger of sinful compliances, to make our stay as short as possible.—(5.) To make reflections after retiring, on the temptations we have met with, and to fortify our minds against future dangers of the same kind.—(6.) To shun, if possible, for the future, those companies, or kinds of company, in which we have met with temptations too strong for our virtue and resolution: And, (7.) which ought to have been mentioned *first*, To aim our prayers and endeavours against the temptations of society, and especially of those companies, which, by the nature of our situation or business in life, we are obliged most commonly to frequent.

11. SOLITUDE, and a sequestered retirement, as we shall see anon, is no security against temptations; and

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ESSAY LV.

TEMPTATIONS arising from SOLITUDE.

1. **A**LTHOUGH a social life, or a life spent in company, has its snares and dangers, yet it has its advantages too; and the society of our fellow-creatures, well conducted, may contribute greatly to our improvement in virtue and happiness. How many noble and useful hints are often started in conversation, which we would have laboured for in vain in the way of private meditation? How many motives to virtue, and dissuatives against vice? How often has a tottering resolution been supported and strengthened by a single word; by a single look or frown?

2. Nor need we imagine, that we can flee from the danger of temptation, by shunning the society of our fellow-creatures; for, there are a number of temptations which seem almost peculiar to *solitude*, and which will pursue us to the most remote and hidden recesses.

3. As God hath made man a *social creature*, and endowed him with *social bents*, it appears he is chiefly designed for a *social, active* life, to give assistance to, and receive assistance from his fellow-creatures; and therefore, that it is not the duty of men to seek and affect solitude and retirement, unless it be occasionally, for the purposes of meditation, self-examination, extraordinary prayer and devotion.

4. If it be the intention of God, that men should live in society, and employ their social powers and talents for the purposes of devotion; we may well suppose that a *monkish, recluse* life, is against the intention of God, and that he may justly give over men to strong temptations, who thus affect a kind of life, so contrary to the end and design of their being.

5. It has been observed, that the first *hermits and recluses*, did greatly corrupt Christianity; and that the monks and nuns of later ages, have been, generally speaking, a very wicked kind of people, infamous for many great vices: For, by binding themselves up under solemn vows, to austerities which God never enjoined, their corruptions have been the more outrageous, and they have been suffered to fall into the vilest abominations.

6. It is remarkable, that the *devil* pursued our Saviour to a wilderness, where he thought he could more effectually ply his temptations against him, than in the society of men. And the evil spirit, in the parable, who left the possessed man, is said to have wandered in *solitary and dry places*, where he consorted with many other spirits. Nor is it unworthy of remark here, that if there is any truth in *witchcraft*, and the pranks and illusions of evil spirits, they have generally prevailed in places *little frequented and thinly peopled*, and have fled places of concourse in the society of men.

7. SOLITUDE often tempts men to sins, through the advantage of secrecy, which they would be ashamed to practise in human society.

8. SOLITUDE naturally generates melancholy, and clouds the mind with gloomy thoughts; thereby darkening and spoiling the judgment.

9. RECLUSES, as they have little society with the world, and know little of the force of these tempta-

tions which accompany a social life, so they are naturally prone to an over-rigid, uncharitable disposition of mind, and censorious reflections on the actions and conduct of those who are engaged in active, social life.

10. THE *devil*, ever vigilant and active to seduce rational creatures, when he cannot get the advantage over them, by the temptations which arise from society, often drives them into fullen solitude; puts them out of temper with the world, and the proper duties of life, and there pursues them with *blasphemous suggestions, unclean thoughts, and desperate resolutions*. And it has been generally observed, that those whom he drives to *self-murder*, have been long haters of society, and lovers of solitude and retirement.

11. UPON the whole. To shun society lest we fall into temptation, is not only rank cowardice, but also very absurd. There are proper times and occasions when we should seek solitude, and when retirement is both necessary and useful; but we should consider the proper duties of our stations as *men* and *Christians*, and never fly society when we have a chance of either doing or getting good by it.

E S S A Y LVI.

How far CHRISTIANS are obliged to recede from their proper Rights, and deny themselves some lawful Enjoyments and Amusements, out of Charity to their weak Brethren, and that they may not lay a Stumbling-block before them.

1. CHRISTIANS, as such, are not abridged of any *natural* or *acquired* right as *men* and *citizens*; nor does their religion forbid them any lawful and innocent enjoyment, or gratification of life, provided it does not fall directly in the way of some duty of religion, for which it ought to be denied for a time*.

2. NOT only have Christians *such liberty in the Lord*, but it is often their duty to plead for, vindicate and assert this liberty, against those who would dispute or infringe it; even while, for prudential reasons, or for conscience sake, they may see it expedient to recede from it, and give it up.

3. THE Apostle, however, gives an important caution in this matter†: “But take heed, lest by any means, this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak.” It is certain, therefore, that this Christian liberty of ours, may in some instances, be used to very bad purposes; and things which are lawful in themselves, are not lawful to *all men*, nor *at all times*,---but ought to be forborn, when, through the ignorance or weakness of our Christian brother, they may be a means of offending him, or leading him

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* 1 Cor. ix. 3,--7.

† 1 Cor. viii. 9.

into guilt. *St. Paul* speaks of a *power or liberty* which he and the other Christians had, to do many things, and yet adds,---“ Nevertheless we have not used this power, but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ*.”

4. THERE are, it seems, some instances, wherein the use and exercise of our Christian liberty, may *destroy a weak and ignorant brother*. *St. Paul*, speaking of meats forbidden by the law of *Moses*, declares the power and liberty which Christians have to use them freely: “ I know, says he, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself;”---yet he adds---“ But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably.---Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died:---For, through thy knowledge (of thy Christian liberty, and use of it) shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died: For, when we sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, we sin against Christ, ---Let no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother’s way. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. But let us follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another†.”

5.---(1.) THIS Christian liberty of ours is never to be given up merely to please, humour, and gratify *some* at the expence of *others*. This was the cause of *Peter’s* base dissimulation, for which his brother *Paul* withstood him to his face, and on account of which he declared, “ that he walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel‡.”

* 1 Cor. ix. 12.

† See Rom. xiv. and 1 Cor. viii.

‡ See Gal. ii. 11,--14.

6.---(2.) OUR Christian liberty is by no means to be betrayed or given up, in order to escape persecution. This treachery seems to have been the chief crime of the *Judaizing teachers*, who urged it upon the Gentile converts to be circumcised, and who themselves observed all the ceremonies of the Jewish law, that they might pass for *Jews*, with the Jewish and Heathen persecutors, under that pretext; and for which *St. Paul*, so severely reproaches them and their followers*.---And indeed, all persecution for religion, and among Christians, is founded on some incroachment on Christian liberty,---or on imposing some things on the conscience inconsistent with it.

7.---(3.) OUR Christian liberty should not be given up to meer peevishness, humour and caprice. Many persons who know, or ought to know the extent of Christian liberty, are yet so unreasonable in their humours, or unhappy in their temper, that they will not allow to others the same innocent liberties which they allow to themselves. Or, while they themselves *swallow a camel*, they lose all charity and temper with their brother, if he does not *strain at a gnat*. Now, to endeavour to please such persons to their good unto edifying, is to aim at an impossibility. Caprice and contradictory humour can never be pleased, never be edified. Indeed, every attempt to please it, is to increase the disorder, and to strengthen its petulancy.

8. OUR Christian liberty ought to be vindicated and adhered to resolutely, where the giving it up is like to be hurtful to the souls of men, and the interests of religion, by propagating *idolatry* and *superstition*. And in this case, persons of the greatest note and weight in the church, should be ready to suffer all things, rather than

* See Gal. ii. 1,--6.---iii. 1,--4.---v. 1,--13.

give it up by base compliance. This was *Archbishop Cranmer's* crime. Reformation in religion and separation from idolatrous and superstitious communities, can never be accomplished or justified, but on this principle. Upon this foundation is built the *protestant reformation*, and those protestants who still labour to reduce Christianity to its original and native simplicity, act very commendably on this principle, and will ever be had in esteem by the proper judges and true friends of Christian liberty.

9. CHRISTIAN liberty, is in many cases to be given up in compassion to the ignorance and inveterate prejudices of others, until this ignorance and these prejudices can be removed. The apostolic decree * was made on this account; and the Jewish converts were allowed to have their children circumcised, and to abstain from certain meats, and to observe certain legal ceremonies, until they would be better instructed in the principles of their Christian liberty:-- Whereas, the Gentile or Heathen converts were not indulged in these matters, as they had no inveterate prejudices of education in their favour†.

10. OUR Christian liberty ought perhaps in many cases to be given up in favour of *incurable weakness*, especially where it is *general*. Suppose a whole neighbourhood of weak Christians had got it in their heads, from the apostolic decree, that it was sinful to eat blood, or things strangled; or, from any other means were persuaded, that it was an unpardonable crime to eat with unwashen hands, or to shave their heads or beards, or any other whimsy; it would perhaps become

* Acts xv. 22.

† See the whole Epistle to the Galatians, compared with Acts xvi. 1,--3.---xxi. 17,--28.

the duty of an intelligent Christian, living among them, and who could not reason them out of their superstition, to conform to these customs and usages, lest he might, by his example, induce some of these poor people to act against their consciences, and so to contract guilt. This is that giving up of Christian liberty which is plead for by *St. Paul**.

11. BUT if such a community should hold it sinful to marry; or to worship God in public assemblies (as the *Familists* and *Brownists*); or to receive the sacraments (as the *Quakers*); or should insist on the necessity of doing something *forbidden by God*, or of omitting something commanded by him; in these cases we ought not to comply, but insist on our Christian liberty.

12. MANY things which are simply lawful in themselves, yet because of the abuses made of them, ought to be shunned and denied by Christians. There can be no moral evil in often visiting a tavern, or a house of infamous report, supposing there is no ill design, or ill practice; nay, perhaps, it may be done with the best views and from the best motives; Yet, because of the scandal that might attend this practice, it might be best to refrain it. I know not whether *card-playing* and *dancing* may not be perfectly innocent in themselves; yet if these practices are generally abused, it were best to discountenance and refrain them.

13. THE general rule seems to be this, that wherever the use of our Christian liberty, has a direct tendency to hurt the souls of others (unless in some capital point where it ought not, and cannot with safety be given up) it is best to forego it and recede from it; for, our neighbour's good and edification is a charity we owe him. But, as all things may be abused to evil

* Rom. xiv. and 1 Cor. viii. and ix.

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* Rom. xiv. and 1 Cor. viii. and ix.

purposes, so may the lawful use of our Christian liberty. And after all, *prudence* and *discretion* must be the umpires in this matter.



ESSAY LVII.

What DIVERSIONS are lawful, and the WAY to regulate them.

1. **T**HE best moralists have condemned some fashionable diversions, as unlawful in themselves. Such are games of *hazard*, and success in which depends in a great measure on *lottery*, such as *cards*, *dice*, &c. &c.

2. If there are any other diversions which are either directly sinful in themselves, or lead unavoidably to the corruption of manners, these are wholly out of the question at present, as being in themselves unlawful, and therefore forbidden to Christians; such as *gaming* and *drunkenness*, *chambering* and *wantonness*, *impure dalliances*, *lasciviousness*, *effeminacy*, &c.

3. Of *lawful diversions*, some are calculated to exercise the body, and those are best suited to sedentary persons, whose callings afford them too little exercise for the purposes of health; such as *running*, *walking*, *leaping*, *fencing*, and all those plays or diversions which give motion and exercise to the body, and tend to circulate the blood, and promote digestion and perspiration. Others are calculated to recreate and unbend the mind, such are *chess*, and a number of others; and these seem best adapted for those who live an active, laborious, fatiguing life.

4. THE very words, *diversions* and *amusements*, point out the use and design of these pastimes. They are only intended to unbend the mind, and refresh the body and animal spirits, that those who use them may be the better fitted and qualified to discharge the serious, necessary and important businesses of life; the care of the soul and of the body.

5. FROM this notion of *diversions*, *amusements* or *recreations*, we may learn many important lessons about the right choice, use and regulation of them. As,

(1.) It is evident, that a life spent in a continual, or almost perpetual round of diversions, must be a *wicked, ill spent* life. This is wholly to misemploy life, and neglect the proper business of it; and that too, under the wicked notion, that it is innocent, proper and beneficial to do so.

(2.) If diversion or amusement may be properly considered as the *physic of life*, by which the disorders of the body and mind, contracted by an intense application to the serious and proper business of it, are relieved and cured, and their vigour, sprightliness and activity restored, for a fresh application: Then, to spend one's life in a perpetual round of diversions, is as absurd and preposterous, as though a person, neglecting all food, should live wholly upon physic, under a pretence of preserving his health and vigour.

(3.) If habits are contracted by repeated acts; then a life spent in giddy diversions and amusements, must in course of time so relax and effeminate both the body and mind, as to render them wholly unfit for any application to the serious and important businesses of life; must beget an inveterate habit of the worse kind of idleness; and, in fine, must turn persons, thus devoted to diversions, into mere *whirligigs* and *useless drones*, burdens and nuisances to society. A life of perpetual

diversion, is a life of perpetual intoxication; and persons devoted to it, are generally the most useless and mischievous members of society. Witness perpetual dancers and gamesters.

(4.) WHEN diversions are turned into the constant business of life, they wholly change their nature, and lose their good effects; they are so far from unbending the mind, that they become its only burden; they are so far from recreating and refreshing the body, that they fatigue it, and exhaust the animal spirits; they are so far from rendering the body vigorous, and the mind chearful, that they injure the health and sink the spirits. This is, with a witness, to make a toil of pleasure, and to turn that cordial drop, which makes life's bitter draught go glibly down, into a *rank* and *deleterious poison*.

(5.) If the proper design of diversions is, by refreshing the body and recreating the mind, to render both more lively and vigorous, and thereby fit them for a more vigorous application to the proper, necessary and important duties of life; then all such diversions and amusements as evidently tend to hurt the body or the mind, and obstruct the proper end of diversions, must needs be unlawful and sinful: And the same will hold true of lawful and innocent diversions continued too long at a time. Although *gaming* were innocent in itself, yet it were extremely unlawful to spend whole weeks, night and day, in that diversion, to the breaking of natural rest, and thereby hurting both the body and mind, and to the neglect of all duties, civil, social and religious. Although *dancing* may be innocent in itself, yet to spend whole nights in that exercise, to the fatiguing of the body, neglecting all the duties of the family and closet, and unfitting persons for the proper business of the next day, is certainly criminal and

unlawful.—For a poor man, whose family calls for all his time and labour to clothe and feed them, to spend one day, much more, *several days* in diversions, is a sin against *justice, charity and mercy*.

6. DIVERSIONS which may be innocent and lawful to *some*, and in *certain circumstances*, may be yet unlawful to *others*, and in *certain different circumstances*. As,

(1.) It may not be absolutely unlawful in a Christian, to amuse himself by playing an *innocent game*, or playing on a *musical instrument*, or *walking or riding*, or, perhaps dancing;---yet to mix with *swearing, drinking*, or *profane company* for the sake of partaking in these amusements, as it would be extremely *indecent*, so it would also be very *criminal*; as it would shew, that this *love of pleasure* was superior to his *aversion to vice and evil example*; and as his example in this particular instance, would look like a giving a sanction to the vices of his company.---(2.) To persons who find, that by any particular diversions and amusements, they are strongly tempted to sin; such *diversions or amusements* must needs be extremely sinful:---Thus, supposing *dancing and gaming* to be *innocent and inoffensive* in themselves, yet to persons who, by the one, are tempted to *fret, swear and cheat*; or who, by the other, are tempted to *other sins*, these diversions must be *highly criminal*.

---(3.) Where any particular diversion, though innocent in itself, is greatly abused in a place, and madly pursued by the inhabitants, to the prejudice of *industry and good morals*; Christians ought not only to *abstain from*, but also *bear a testimony against* such diversions, so abused, for the good of society.---(4.) Diversions which may be innocent in themselves, may change their nature and become exceeding criminal, either by being *mistimed*, or *too long continued*. For instance, to indulge to amusements on the *Sabbath-day*, or in a time of *public*

distress or *calamity* which calls for consideration, mourning, prayer and repentance ;---or, to indulge to diversions and amusements, when *justice, charity* and *mercy* call us to *other* and *more important* business, is doubtless *very sinful*. Or when, (as was observed above) we squander much of our precious time in trifling amusements, and make them the *business of life* ; this is to act the part of the *wicked and unprofitable servant*, who was justly condemned to outer darkness.

7. A *LIFE* spent in giddy diversions, is utterly incompatible with the hopes of salvation ; being inconsistent with a *due and serious concern* either for the *soul* or the *body* ; for ourselves, or for others.

8. It might be a good touch-stone for such diversions as are *suitable* and *becoming* for Christians ; to try within ourselves whether we could seriously ask God's blessing upon them ; or quit them at an instant, and address ourselves to God in solemn prayer : For, as it is our duty always to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation, and to be ever in a posture of readiness to meet the summons of death in the way of our duty ; and as we know not the moment we may be called to give an account of our stewardship, all diversions inconsistent with this frame of mind, seem improper for Christians.

9. To render diversions or amusements *lawful*, they must have these properties :---(1.) They must be *innocent* in themselves :---(2.) They must be *decent* and of *good reputation*, or such as the generality of good people have not condemned (and this will cut off *card-playing*, and almost all *games of hazard*, more especially all *gaming for money*, from the list of innocent diversions) :---(3.) They ought to be such as are not of pernicious consequence, by the bad regulation and abuse of them in the places where we live :---(4.) No more of our

precious time should be consumed by them, than is barely necessary for the purpose of recreation; nor should they be oftener used than is needful, lest the mind be intoxicated by them, and led off from more important matters, by contracting a habit of trifling and levity:---(5.) They should be such as we find by experience are not attended with strong temptations to ourselves, and as have no sensible tendency to draw off our minds from the duties of religion, or from the necessary and important duties of life. Upon the whole, they should be such, and so used and regulated as not to excite any remorse of conscience in a sensible, serious and tender mind.

10. THOUGH it does not seem reasonable, or consistent with the present frail and imperfect state of human nature, to forbid all kinds of worldly amusements and recreations, as *unlawful*, yet to persons of a right way of thinking, and of a spiritual and refined taste, these kinds of diversions will be found *very little necessary*; and the very duties of religion, such as *reading, singing of psalms* with melody in the heart, *meditation* and *contemplation* on the works and ways of God, *religious conference*, and *doing good offices* to the souls and bodies of men, will furnish pleasures and delights, far preferable to any that can result from worldly pleasures and amusements.

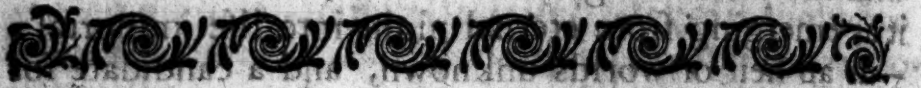
11. IN short, the fashionable diversions are attended with so many snares and dangers to virtue and innocence, and, at the best, are such *thieves of precious time*, that those discover the *soundest judgment* who have the least taste and fondness for them, and who least frequent and join in them.

12. RELIGION promises the *biggest* and *noblest* comforts and pleasures, and those who betray too fond a desire for worldly pleasures and diversions, either prove that they have never experienced the pleasures of religion,

or, by their conduct, persuade the world, that the others are *equally necessary and agreeable*.

3. THE devil, by a surprizing dexterity, has turned some of the most solemn periods of life, into seasons devoted to the madest riot and giddy diversion; witness our *birth-days*, and the *first day of every New Year*.

But if we viewed it on the little help's stranger, if we considered with the penetrating eye of reason,



as a glimmering spark of being, just struck from nothing by the all-creating rock, which and borne to earth, and stars have returned to their native darkness or non-

E S S A Y LVIII.

The VALUE and IMPORTANCE of a CHILD.

IMMORTALITY has stamped an amazing value on man. No conscious being, who is capable of eternal happiness or misery, can possibly be *unimportant or of little account*. Man, who carries about with him a *rational, undying* soul, little knows or considers of what a treasure he is possessed. All the beauties, all the riches, all the stupendous wonders of material nature are, in comparison with it, less than nothing, and vanity. If man considered this, would it not be more his endeavour to act up to the dignity of his nature? Would he not be ashamed of *base, mean and ignoble* actions, which vilify and debase his real importance, and degrade him below his rank in the universe?

2. THE moment in which a rational, immortal spirit animates a human *fetus*, a spark is kindled which shall never be extinguished. The material fun will grow old, wax dim with years, and be probably put out as a lamp that burneth; the stars shall fall from their orbits, and

be covered with darkness; but this breath of the Almighty, this intellectual spark once kindled up in the moral world, shall burn on with undiminished and ever-increasing lustre, as long as God himself endures.

3. THE birth of a child we deem to be but a trifling event, and look with *indifference*, perhaps with *contempt*, on the little, helpless stranger. But if we viewed it with the penetrating eye of reason; if we considered it as emerging from eternal night into life immortal;—as an heir of worlds unknown, and a candidate for an everlasting state;—as a glimmering spark of being, just struck from nothing by the all-creating rock, which must burn and flame on to eternity, when suns and stars have returned to their native darkness or non-entity;—which must survive the funeral of nature, and live through the rounds of endless ages; which must either rise from glory to glory, ascending perfection's scale by endless gradations, or sink deeper and deeper into the bottomless abyss of misery, and to which its immortality must either prove an *unsufferable curse*,—or a *blessing inconceivable*, according to the manner in which it shall have acquitted itself in its present probationary state—we shall clearly discern, that the value and importance of a human infant can scarcely be computed.

4. To illustrate this thought, let us briefly consider, *The evil or good* which may be either *done or received* by a child, in the course of its existence. And,

(I.) PERHAPS this child is an *embrio-fiend*. Knowest thou, O man, O parent, to what this child is born? Of what this child is capable? It is now a pitiable, helpless infant, but if thou knewest the enormous sins and dreadful sufferings with which its future existence is pregnant, and most of them probably through thy own sinful example and guilty neglect, thou wouldst be so far from rejoicing at its birth, that thou wouldst

weep and lament for the miseries which are coming upon it, and upon thyself for thy neglect of the duties which thou owest it. Perhaps thou hast never prayed that God might sanctify this child while in the womb. It has been indeed baptized; but hast thou ever offered up one fervent prayer for it since it has been born? Hast thou offered it up to the holy Trinity by faith, and with that solemnity which the baptismal dedication requires? Instead of setting before it a pious and virtuous example, teaching it to pray, inspiring it with a horror against vice, instilling into its tender opening mind, the principles of piety and good morals, correcting its errors, and restraining its passions and appetites, hast thou not set before it the very worst example—taught it the language of blasphemy and profanity, fostered every malignant passion, and cherished every budding vice in its soul? And what is the consequence? It grows up a monster of wickedness, a *devil incarnate*. It spreads the baneful contagion of vice as far as its influence can reach; becomes the *tempter*, the *devil* of every company; the spoiler and obstructor of all good! How many of its fellow-immortals has it drawn into guilt and misery? Perhaps it at length becomes infamous for wickedness, and blots the annals of history with a character disgraceful to human nature, and with crimes before *unparalleled, unheard of!* And O who can describe the miseries which await it in a state of retribution? The *Neros*, the *Herods*, the *tyrants*, the *scourges* of the earth, were once helpless infants!

(2.) PERHAPS this child is an *embryo-angel*. Knowest thou, O man, O parent, to what this child is born, of what this child is capable? It has been the child of thy prayers and vows. Thou hast solemnly given it up to God in baptism, and he has graciously accepted the surrender. It is thy constant solicitous care to re-

commend it daily to the guidance and protection of its Father in heaven; to set a blameless, pious and virtuous example before it; to instil into its tender opening mind the principles of piety, integrity and universal goodness. Indulgent heaven smiles on thine endeavours and renders them successful by the concurring aids of omnipotent grace. The seed of knowledge and of grace so liberally sown, will presently grow up into a plenteous harvest of usefulness here and glory hereafter. The child, like the holy child Jesus, will grow up in knowledge, as in stature, and in favor both with God and man. The implanted principle of grace, shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life*. He shall bring forth much fruit to the glory of God, and to the good of his fellow mortals. Every day will bring him some good; or make him the instrument of some good to his fellow men. Nor shall his progress in holiness and happiness be terminated by this mortal life, but probably go on through eternal ages. In a word, who can conceive the good of which such a child may be made the instrument, or the degrees of happiness and of glory to which it may be advanced? St. Paul, and all those worthies under the Patriarchal, Mosaic and Christian dispensations, who wrought so much good in the world, and who now shine in such superior orbs of glory, were once feeble, despised infants! May I speak it with propriety on this occasion, The blessed Jesus was once a child!

5. SINCE such therefore, is the amazing importance of a child, why should we wonder, that Jesus took up such in his arms and blessed them, declaring, that of such was the kingdom of heaven? Why should we wonder, that their guardian angels continually behold the face of our Father in heaven? Why should we wonder, that such a stress is laid on their education in the

* John iv. 14.

holy scriptures, and that our risen ascending Lord should have given it so particularly in charge to his Apostle *Peter*, to be peculiarly attentive to this, as one of the highest proofs of his love to him: *Simon Peter lovest thou me? Feed my lambs**.

6. If *such* is the *value* and *importance* of children, can *parents*, can *masters*, can the *clergy* ever be sufficiently attentive to the unspeakable important business of their religious education?

7. PARENTS, more especially, are obliged to this duty by a number of the weightiest motives and considerations. (1.) They have been the immediate instruments of bringing their children into a tempting, insnaring world, and have transmitted to them an hereditary taint of corruption, the seed of guilt and of misery. (2.) Providence has so ordered it, that children are long continued in a helpless state under the care of their parents, that they may have a sufficient time and opportunity to form them for usefulness in this life, and glory in that which is to come; and has implanted a strong *storge* or *natural affection* in their hearts towards their children, which should powerfully prompt them to this duty. (3.) Their own comfort and the good of human society, should also powerfully incline parents to cultivate the minds and hearts of their children with the greatest assiduity.

8. THREE things seem of prime importance in the education of children, *instruction*, *government* and *example*.

(1.) INSTRUCTION should be begun as soon as children are capable of receiving it, which is generally very early in life. The plainest and most practical truths should first be instilled into the tender minds of children, and that in the plainest and most familiar manner, with

* Matth. xviii. 10. Mark x. 16. John xxi. 15.

such a *seriousness* and *solemnity* as is not forbidding and disgusting, but which may rather convey *pleasure* and *amusement* to the mind. And parents ought to improve their own understandings, that they may be better qualified properly to instruct their children; which is no easy task to the wisest.

(2.) In the article of government, parents should attentively study the tempers and dispositions of their children; as upon some ingenious tempers, gentle reproofs will have a better effect than stripes, and with others it is absolutely necessary to use *severe reproof*, and the *rod of correction*. In government, it is best to begin with mildness in all children, as correction is a duty which is managed well with great difficulty: When correction is found necessary, it should not be inflicted *rashly*, without duly weighing the *nature* of the crime and its true *demerit*. The greatest severity in punishing should be for *immoralities*; *indiscretions* should be passed over with a light correction. A child should never be punished for *dullness* or other *natural infirmities*. In correcting no signs of *revenge* or *violent passion* should ever appear, but the child who is corrected should be made sensible, that it is done with reluctance, and purely for its own good; and much care should be taken, to give it a deep conviction of the evil of the crime, for which it is chastised.

(3.) ALL the instructions and corrections of parents will avail nothing, but rather make matters worse, if their *examples* are *vicious* and *immoral*.

E S S A Y LIX.

THE CONSTRAINTS OF CHRIST'S LOVE,

A

S E R M O N

F R O M

2 CORINTHIANS V. 13, 14.

For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to GOD; Or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of CHRIST constraineth us.

IT seems evident by the whole tenor of this epistle, that the holy and zealous Apostle had not a few enemies in the church of *Corinth*, and those too such as he might least of all have expected---his fellow professors and fellow-teachers of christianity. These vain-glorious teachers, instead of building upon the Apostle's foundation, and supporting and confirming his authority over his beloved converts, endeavoured by every trick of artifice and calumny to overturn and subvert it. They represented him to the *Corinthians* as mean and contemptible, as light and inconstant, as proud, overbearing and imperious, as a subverter of the law, yea, as a downright *mad-man*. They put a bad construction on all his words and actions, prefer-

ed themselves before him, and endeavoured by every art to raise their own credit on the ruins of his apostolical authority and reputation.

SUCH treatment as this could not but greatly affect the good Apostle, not only as it tended to cool and weaken the affections of his beloved Corinthian converts towards him; but more especially, as it was likely to prejudice their minds against the important doctrines of the gospel which he had, with great labour, zeal and sincerity, preached amongst them. And hence it is, that we find so great a part of this epistle employed in *St. Paul's* vindication of his own character and conduct, as an Apostle of CHRIST;---in reclaiming the *Corinthian* church from an undue attachment to these Judaizing teachers,---and in rekindling proper regards to those distinguishing and unadulterated doctrines of the gospel, which he had, in the course of his ministry, propagated amongst them.

As that peculiar *fervency* and *ardour* with which this eloquent Apostle of the Gentiles prosecuted the gospel ministry, seems to be one of the great quarrels which his enemies had against him, he makes a noble and spirited apology to the Corinthians for his conduct in this respect, from the 10th verse to the end of the chapter; alledging the *grandeur* and *importance* of the doctrines which the gospel reveals, as a sufficient reason for the greatest possible zeal and importunity of address.

At the *tenth verse* he had laid down the certainty of a future judgment, in which all men must appear before the tribunal of CHRIST, to receive, every one, according to the deeds done in the body, whether good or bad. And this he alledges as one powerful reason and motive of zeal and fervor in the gospel ministry: *Knowing therefore*, says he, *the terrors of the LORD, we persuade men*; that is, being firmly assured of a strict

and impartial judgment, and its awful consequences—of that eternal and irreversibile sentence of condemnation which shall then pass upon all finally unbelieving sinners, and which shall fill their souls with unspeakable terror and endless despair, we use every argument and every art of address to persuade men;—to *urge*, and, if possible, to *engage*, them to escape the terrors of that day, by a timous application to CHRIST, and a sincere repentance.

AND as some of these enemies, had probably unjustly charged him with a vain-glorious applauding, or commending of himself in his former epistle, he wipes off this assertion by telling them, that what he had been obliged to say of this kind, was only in his own necessary defence, and to furnish his friends with a suitable answer to his censorious and hypocritical enemies: For, says he, “We commend not ourselves again unto you, “but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that “you may have somewhat to answer them which glory “in appearance, and not in heart;” *i. e.* who seem outwardly to glory and triumph over us, although inwardly they are *self-condemned*, and are conscious, that they have no reason to glory against us.

IN the words of our text the Apostle still continues to vindicate himself, and suggests a *farther* and *still more powerful* motive of his zeal and earnestness in the work of the ministry: For, says he, “whether we be beside “ourselves, it is to God: Or whether we be sober, it “is for your cause; for the love of CHRIST constraineth “us.” As though he had said; “If, to *cold and indifferent* spectators, who are not actuated by the same “motives, and have not the same view and sense of “divine things as we the Apostles have, we should “seem to speak and act with a degree of zeal bordering “upon frenzy or enthusiasm, and to be transported

‘ beyond our *natural selves*—beyond the cold measures
 ‘ of human prudence or discretion—it is a *zeal for the*
 ‘ *glory of God* which animates us and produces these
 ‘ *extraordinary effects* :—Or if, on the other hand, we
 ‘ be *sober*, and prosecute all the arts of calm and dis-
 ‘ passionate reasoning to convince sinners, and lead
 ‘ them to God through CHRIST, it is *for your sakes* we
 ‘ take such serious pains, in a matter which so nearly
 ‘ concerns your highest interests. So, that *love to God*,
 ‘ and *benevolence to men*, are the two grand principles
 ‘ by which we are actuated, and well may we be zeal-
 ‘ ous in so good a cause ; *for the love of CHRIST con-*
 ‘ *straineth us*—That unparalelled love of his, manifested
 ‘ in the redemption of a guilty world ;—that love which
 ‘ engaged him to die for a lost and dead world ; a world
 ‘ of creatures who were dead in trespasses and sins ;
 ‘ void of spiritual life, and under the condemnatory
 ‘ sentence of a broken law ; This wonderful love of
 ‘ CHRIST (as well as the certain prospect of a future,
 ‘ impartial judgment) *constraineth us*—It *beareth us*
 ‘ *away* as with a *strong and resistless* torrent, so that we
 ‘ cannot resist or withstand that impetuosity, with
 ‘ which it carries us on to the most active and zealous
 ‘ discharge of our ministerial duty.’

THE Greek word *sunechei*, which we render *constrain-*
eth, is vastly emphatical. Sometimes it signifies to
throng and *press* on every side, as with a croud* ; some-
 times, to *hold fast* or *have in possession*, as a prisoner † ;
 sometimes, to *surround*, or *invest a town by siege*, to pre-
 vent the enemy's escape ‡ ; sometimes, to be *in a strait*
 between two contrary opinions, or to have the mind
 in an anxious state of hesitancy or suspense between

* Luke viii. 45.

† Luke xxii. 63.

‡ Luke xix. 43.

two opposite resolutions or determinations†; and sometimes it signifies to be strongly urged or pressed in spirit, under a kind of irresistible impulse of mind, which forcibly urges one on to the revelation of some mystery, or the declaration of some truth; as it is said, Acts xviii. 5. That Paul (*suneicheto to pneumati*) "being pressed in spirit, testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ." And it seems to have much this last sense in our text: "The love of Christ constraineth us,"—it irresistably moves, impels, and bears us on to zeal and importunity in the sacred duties of our Apostleship, so that we can by no means disengage ourselves from the binding nature and urgency of those motives and obligations it lays us under. "For, as though he had said, how can we be cold and unaffected in promoting the salvation of sinners; a cause in which our glorious Master not only laboured and suffered, but even laid down his life: Or, "We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." Therefore, this dying love of Christ constraineth us to be instant and importunate with sinners, not only to accept the precious benefits it has purchased for them, but also to walk worthy of the glorious privileges and hopes it has conferred upon them.

Now, that we may the better perceive the propriety and force of the Apostle's reasoning; and feel the power and constraint of a Saviour's love, I shall, in the first place, by divine assistance, briefly shew you the peculiar and specific nature of the love of CHRIST, and by what characters it is distinguished from, and exalted above the love of mortals. Secondly, Explain it by its effects,

† Phil. i. 23.

or shew in what instances it most eminently appears and is expressed. And *thirdly*, Apply the doctrine to some practical uses, by shewing what influence it should have upon us, both as *Ministers* and *people*. And,

I. I AM to shew you the peculiar and specific nature of this love of CHRIST, and by what properties it is chiefly distinguished from, and exalted above the love of Mortals. And,

1. WE will find, on the smallest reflection, that *love* is a certain mode or affection of the mind, drawing it forth with desire and complacency towards some object; and, including in it (according to the scripture notion of it, and as it is exercised from God to man) *compassion, benevolence and bounty*.

LOVE, as it exists in us, besides its imperfection, has generally a great mixture of *selfishness*. 'We are sensible of a penury and want in our own beings.' We feel a dependance not only upon God, but also in some measure on our *fellow-creatures*, both for *being* and *well-being*. Our happiness in the present state, is neither complete, nor independent, and therefore we 'seek some augmentation of it, and some addition to it, by union with the objects we love.' If we closely and impartially examine the frame of our own nature, and the motives of our actions, we will find, that perhaps the most pure and disinterested acts of our love, benevolence and charity, are mixed with some degree of selfishness.—Let even a wicked person, who has any remains of natural tenderness and humanity left in his breast, see a man who is an object of great pity and compassion, his heart will melt towards him,—he will *feel* for his distress, and, if possible, give him some succour or relief;—not perhaps from any hope of reward.

in this life, nor merely out of ostentation, *that he may be seen and praised of men*;—not out of any love to God, or obedience to his command, nor, from any prospect of a future reward—(the supposition excludes all such motives); but *purely* to relieve the anxious and sympathetic feelings of his own breast. He relieves the miserable, that he himself may be less miserable. He endeavours to mitigate the pain of his suffering and distressed fellow-creature, that he himself may be less pained and distressed. And although good and truly virtuous and gracious men may have nobler and purer motives of their charity, yet it is much to be questioned, whether something of self-interest may not mix itself with their most disinterested actions.

I AM far, indeed, from condemning this natural sympathy and compassion, so deeply implanted in the human heart, by the God of nature, for the succour and relief of our fellow-men. I only mention this in proof of what I have advanced, namely, 'That human love or charity, in the purest instances of it, is not perhaps wholly disinterested: Either *glory, or fame, or pleasure, or profit, or commodity, or some interested selfish motive or obligation* so mix themselves with the most generous heroic acts of our love and charity, as to blast their pretensions to *purity and disinterestedness*, and greatly to impair their merit.'

BUT now 'the love of CHRIST is not this way excited. We had neither done any thing to *oblige* him, nor had we any thing to *engage* him, farther than the misery in which he saw us involved might *move* him.' He loved us *only* because he *would* love us. He had no *by-end*, no *self-interest* to serve in loving us and having compassion upon us. *Herein is love*—a peculiar and distinguishing love—not *that we loved him, but that he loved us*; which is equally true of the Father and of the Son*.

* 1 John iv. 19.

2. THIS love of CHRIST, as it is a *pure* and *disinterested*, so it is 'a *free, generous and heroic* love; like that of some great and public benefactor, who touched with commiseration for the afflictions and distresses of mankind, undertakes their relief. *When we were without strength, ungodly sinners, enemies*, says the Apostle, *CHRIST died for us*.*" Either of these three last characters might, in the estimate of human reason, have frustrated the kind intentions of a Saviour's love: But lo! it triumphs over them all. It is a *singular, irresistible, unconquerable, triumphant* love;—a love, as the wise man describes that passion, *stronger than death; many waters, numberless provocations and indignities, could not quench it*†. Many and great obstacles stood in its way, the wrath of God, the cruelty of men, the rage of devils, the shame and pain of the cross, and, what was worse than all, the ingratitude and obstinacy of those very sinners who were the objects of this love, and their contempt of and aversion to its saving designs—and yet it surmounted them all! Are mankind *ungodly, sinners, enemies*? Yet CHRIST will love them and die for them! O wonderful philanthropy! Surely no instance of human love can equal this. We have heard of and applauded brave and generous men, who have hazarded and exposed their lives for their friends, their country, their religion;—yea, we have heard, perhaps in the single instance of *Damon and Pythias*, of one friend's offering to lay down his life for another. And indeed, as our Saviour observes, *greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends*; this being the very utmost extent of *human friendship*‡: But greater love *hath* CHRIST, who laid down his life for his enemies!

O O

* Rom. v. 6, 8, 10.

† Cant. viii. 6.

‡ John xv. 13.

3. YEA, so great and unparallel is this love of CHRIST to sinners, that it surmounts all human thought and comprehension. The Apostle urges his beloved *Ephesians* to *comprehend with all saints, the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of CHRIST, which, adds he, passeth knowledge**. The breadth, and length, and depth, and height of this love are beyond our *ken* in the present state; and indeed, we shall, perhaps, never be able *fully* to comprehend them. In order to know the just dimensions of a Saviour's love, we must first know the full dignity of his person, the greatness of his condescension, and the depth of his sufferings; and these, perhaps, no created understanding will ever be able fully to comprehend. What a strange command or requisition, therefore, is this?—to know and comprehend a love, which is *incomprehensible* and *passeth knowledge*!—I answer, this is a lively expression of the distinguishing greatness of CHRIST's love, in the Apostle's *grand* and *masterly* manner. The love of CHRIST is a subject which all the saints search and pry into with the greatest attention and delight. They endeavour to comprehend it more and more: 'something they know; more they desire to know; they stoop down with the angels, *and desire to look into these things*†.' They are daily making new discoveries and new researches into the wonders of his love which *passeth knowledge*, and which will prove the continual exercise and the increasing joy and admiration of their perfected spirits, through the ages of eternity,—when they shall join in that new and perpetual song, "Worthy is the lamb, that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing:—for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people

* Ephes. iii. 18, 19.

† 1 Pet. i. 12.

"and nation*."—Now, the Apostle prays for these *Ephesians*, that the *same mind* might be in them, and that with all saints, they might study more and more to comprehend the boundless and amazing dimensions of the love of CHRIST, as being the most powerful motive to reciprocal love, and cheerful universal obedience.

By such characters then is this love of CHRIST distinguished from, and exalted above, the love of mortals. It is *pure* and *disinterested*---*free*, *generous*, and *heroic*---and exceeds all human comprehension. I proceed.

II. To explain this love of CHRIST by its effects; or to shew in what instances it most eminently appears and is expressed. And here the field is so exceeding large, that I must of necessity, be very brief and general. Were an angel, with all his heavenly knowledge and eloquence, to attempt a display of the grand proofs and effects of his love, how infinitely must he come short of doing justice to the subject? How much more *we*, whose views and apprehensions are limited and confined?---But that we may attempt it in our feeble and imperfect manner,

I. THE greatness of our Saviour's love manifests itself in the *readiness* and *cheerfulness* with which he undertook our relief in the covenant of redemption.—Great was the misery into which mankind were fallen. *All were dead*, as the verse below our text assures us. The human race, as *one man*, had revolted and apostatized from God, and were become slaves to *satan* and their own lusts. The whole world of mankind were become guilty before God, and were enemies to him by wicked works. This is that *spiritual death*,---that separation of the soul from God, the fountain of *spiri-*

* Rev. v. 9,--12.

tual and eternal, as well as of natural life,—that Death is trespasses and sins, mentioned by the Apostle, Eph. ii. v. —And the plain and just consequence of this, was a sentence of condemnation to eternal death.

SUCH was the condition of lapsed man when CHRIST undertook for him; proportionably great therefore must that price and work of redemption be, which was necessary to restore the human race to God's forfeited favour, and to their own lost purity, perfection and happiness. God's majesty was offended, and his law transgressed. The former must therefore be *appeased* and the latter *honoured*. For this purpose the Redeemer must assume our nature; a body must be prepared for him, in which he must not only *obey* and *suffer*, but even *die*! *All were dead, and he must die for all*. Before he could see his seed;—see the travail of his soul and be satisfied:—before the Father would give him *the Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession*, he must *bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows*; he must be *wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and make his soul an offering for sin*.*

THIS was the hard law of redemption,—these the arduous conditions to which our Redeemer must submit! He must assume a body;—he must *suffer* and *obey*, *bleed* and *die* in the cause! And yet how cheerfully does he undertake it, when there was no other to help or bring deliverance?—"Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire," says he,—"then said I, lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God: Yea, thy law is written within my heart†." He well knew the will of his heavenly Father: He perfectly understood the difficult law of redemption which he had put himself un-

* Isa. liii. 4, 5, 11. Psal, ii, 8. .

† Psal, xl. 6,--8.

der: He knew how dearly he must purchase the salvation of sinners. The black and dismal scene of his sufferings was full in his view; and yet he *so loved us* as to submit with delight—rejoicing in the distant prospect of relieving and succouring perishing rebels, on these difficult terms. *Lo, I come*, says the benevolent Redeemer—“I delight to do thy will, O my God!—“He rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and “his delights were with the sons of men of old, even “from everlasting§.”

2. How surprizing an instance have we of his love, in his *incarnation*, in consequence of these engagements? “In the fullness of time, God sent forth his “Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that he “might redeem them that are under the law*.” “The “word, (says St. John) was made flesh, and dwelt among us†.” The *Messiah* became IMMANUEL, God with us, God manifest in the flesh, clothed with mortality, and *tabernacling* among men! So great was his condescension and abasement, that he “laid aside a “glory which he had with the Father before the world “was‡.” Although he was originally *in the form of* God, vested with divine perfections and honours; yet he veiled these glories under the rags of humanity, and “took upon him the form of a servant§. For “we know the grace of our Lord Jesus CHRIST, that “though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, “that we through his poverty might be rich||.” Amazing condescension! Unparalleled grace! Had an angel, touched with compassion for a few perishing mortals, and in order to do them some signal service, condes-

§ Prov. viii. 31.

* Gal. iv. 4.

† John i. 14.

‡ John xvii. 5.

§ Phil. ii. 6.

|| 2 Cor. viii. 9.

cended for a while to leave his seraphic joys; to take up his dwelling in a human body, and belied to its laws and its miseries; we should highly extol such an act of generous condescension, and be ever speaking of our *good angel*, with wonder and gratitude. But, behold! here is greater love, and a lower stoop of condescension! CHRIST, the Lord of angels, before whom the highest orders of these blessed spirits bow and adore in the most prostrate and submissive forms, has *done this*! He so loved us, “as to make himself of
 “no reputation; to take upon him the form of a ser-
 “vant, and, being found in fashion as a man, he hum-
 “bled himself yet farther, and became obedient unto
 “death, even the death of the cross*.”

3. If we consider the peculiar circumstances of his humanity, they will greatly strengthen the argument of his love. He became *an infant*! An infant of *poor, despised* parents! The son of *Mary*, and of *Joseph* the carpenter!—“Blessed Lord, what grace and condescension was this—that thou shouldst be *born* for us—
 “and *thus* born—born in such circumstances of ob-
 “scurity and contempt—thy chamber of state, a *stable*
 “—thy cradle, a *manger*—thy mother, a *poor despised*
 “*virgin*, and thy reputed father, a *labouring mechanick*!”

In like manner, if we trace the various circumstances of our Saviour's life, each of them will serve to illustrate the wonders of his love. While on the stage of public action, he still appeared under the same disadvantages as to any characters of worldly splendor or renown, and in circumstances of low abasement; was still “a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs,
 “despised and rejected of men. The son of man had
 “not where to lay his head†;” and having no worldly

* Phil. ii. 6,—8.

† Matth. viii. 20.

estate, consequently he was of *little worth* in the eyes of the world, and had but *few friends* among the children of men. Nor could his spotless reputation escape the keenest reproaches of sinners. The *holy one* and *the just*; he who *did no sin*, and in whose mouth was *found no guile*, who was *holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners*, and of whom this world was not worthy, was calumniated and traduced as a *blasphemer, a deceiver, a mad-man, and a confederate with devils*. Thus did he endure the contradiction of sinners against himself--'of *sinners*, (O amazing ingratitude!) towards whom he had the kindest intentions, and for whom he was actually doing the kindest things.' Strange, mysterious love, that reconciled the Son of God to such treatment from his own guilty creatures, and engaged him to bear it with a meekness and resignation, which the rudest injuries could neither conquer nor disturb! But,

4. THE last scene of his sufferings and death, is the most astonishing and incomprehensible instance of his love. Here the scriptures lay the *grand emphasis*. He *died*! He died for *ME*! He died for *ALL*! "He bore our sins in his own body, on the tree! He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us to himself, and make us a peculiar people, zealous of good works! To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood;—to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen!" Here *all* is wonder. Eloquence itself is dumb—and the power of words and language utterly unable to express the condescensions of this love. *Agonizing, dying love*! Love written in *tears*, and *groans* and *blood*! The *Son of God* *bleeding* and *expiring* for the *sons of men*, that he might raise them to the dignity and happiness of the *sons of God*! Could he have purchased our re-

demption without the pain and shame of the cross, the condescension had not been so exceedingly amazing: But this could not be;—without *shedding of blood* there could be *no remission*;—and therefore, *he died for us*—he humbled himself to the lowest degree of abasement, and became obedient unto the death, even the death of the cross, the most cruel and painful, as well as vilifying and abasing death;—even the death of a Roman slave! He took a body, on purpose to be *striped, pierced, wounded, broken*—to *languish, bleed and die*!—He became a man, with design that he should be a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs;—“That God” should lay upon him the iniquities of us all, and “make his soul an offering for sin;—might bruise him” and put him to grief†!”

NOR was there one circumstance of horror wanting in this *amazing tragedy*,—one bitter ingredient missing in this *tremendous cup*, a guilty conscience and total despair excepted. Betrayed by his disciple, relinquished by his friends, insulted by devils, surrounded by the cruel mocks and taunts of his enemies, forsaken of his Father, destitute of the supports and consolations of a common martyr, pierced with nails, transfixed with a spear---he expired between two thieves---the sun hiding his face, the earth trembling, graves opening, rocks rending, and all nature, as it were, sympathizing with her expiring LORD, and feeling for the pains and indignities which he endured!---*He died*; and, O, *what a death*?---Let *this death*, therefore, be unto our souls the voucher of his love.---By this let us measure it in its amazing dimensions!---Nor,

5. DID his love terminate with his mortal life on earth: If it had, it had been still incomplete, and we might still have perished in our sins. But as he died for our sins, so he rose again for our justification, and

† Isa. liii.

ever lives at the Father's right hand, making intercession for his people. Hence the Apostle's triumph: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is GOD that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is CHRIST that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of GOD, who also maketh intercession for us*." As the love of CHRIST engaged him to humble himself *even unto death* for sinners, so it also engaged him to become not only an *advocate* and *intercessor* with GOD the Father in their behalf, but also, "a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins†." It engaged him, "after he had led captivity captive, to ascend up on high, and to give gifts to men, even to the rebellious;"—to send down his Spirit as the *renewer* and *comforter* of his people;---to enter into the holiest as their *fore-runner*, to take possession of the promised inheritance in their name and stead, and prepare mansions of glory in his Father's house for their reception, and to "give some Apostles; and some Prophets; and some Evangelists; and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of CHRIST; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST‡."

AND how signal is his grace and love in *applying* the salvation he has purchased, to the souls of men;---in enlightning, converting, guiding, restoring, quickening, and comforting them? He brings them into his banqueting-house, and his banner over them is love; he satisfies their souls as with marrow and with

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* Rom. viii. 33, 34.

† Acts v. 31.

‡ Ephes. iv. 8,--13.

fatness, and causes them to eat hidden manna, and to drink living waters of divine consolations. He knows and pities their infirmities, sympathizes with them under their temptations, sufferings and conflicts, and follows them with a constant, tender care. Whom he loveth he loveth to the end. His affection is not *wavering, fickle, and inconstant*, but *firm and steady* as the foundation of his throne. He never leaves nor forsakes his own, but causes goodness and mercy to follow them all the days of their lives, and when their "flesh" and their heart fails, he is the strength of their heart, "and their everlasting portion". He giveth unto his "sheep, (his believing people) eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any be able to pluck them out of his hand;" and as he has the *keys of death and of the unseen world*, he encourages them joyfully to commit their departing souls into his gracious hands, and confidently to pray with the martyr Stephen, in the very article of death, LORD JESUS, *receive my spirit*.

6. HEAVEN is the glorious theatre on which the super-abounding riches and fulness of the love of CHRIST, both to the souls and bodies of his people, shall be most earnestly and magnificently displayed, in its *last scene and final issue*. Heaven is the full accomplishment of this love. There, if ever, the *heights*, and *depths*, and *lengths*, and *breadths* of this love of CHRIST, will be *fully comprehended*---at least, *clearly perceived*, to the everlasting astonishment of the enraptured soul---ever advancing---ever improving in perfection and happiness---ever drinking in full draughts of those rivers of pleasure which flow from the fountain-head of life, joy, perfection and immortality.---"CHRIST loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might

• Psal. lxxiii. 26.

† John x. 28. Acts vii. 59.

"present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing*." This was his ultimate end in *coming from heaven*, that he might advance his servants and followers *thither*: *I go*, says he, "to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me†."

AND now, having thus shewed you the *peculiar* and *transcendent nature*, and briefly pointed out to you, some of the most eminent expressions and effects of a Redeemer's love, what needs more to illustrate the force of the Apostle's reasoning, or to shew you the constraints of this love?—*Shew you*, did I say? Nay, do we not already begin to *feel* the constraints of this love upon our souls, *bearing us away* with a *sweet*, but powerful influence to higher degrees of *faith, love, gratitude* and *obedience*? have not our souls already begun to *catch the holy fire*, and to enter into the force and spirit of the Apostle's reasoning---"the love of CHRIST constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again?" Do we not already begin to anticipate the songs of the redeemed nations; "Unto HIM that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto GOD, even HIS FATHER; to HIM be glory and dominion for ever and ever; AMEN ‡! Surely our

* Ephes. v. 25.

† John xiv. 3.—xvii. 24.

‡ Rev. i. 5, 6.

hearts must be harder than adamant, more impenetrable than the nether mill-stone, if such a view of the love of CHRIST, how meanly soever displayed, can have no softening influence over them, no constraining force upon them! But this naturally leads me in the

III. PLACE to improve the doctrine to some practical uses, by shewing *what influence and constraint* this love of CHRIST should have upon us, both as Ministers and people.

I. As *Christians*, as the *disciples and followers* of the blessed Jesus, surely this love of his should constrain us to reciprocal acts of love, imitation and obedience.

(1.) To reciprocal acts of love. The natural effects of love, are *gratitude and reciprocal love*. Love begets love, as naturally as a parent begets his own likeness. 'Tis as natural for us to love our friends, and be grateful to our benefactors, as to dread and fly from our enemies.--- Now, as the blessed Jesus is not only most amiable and lovely in himself, possessed of every natural and moral excellency which can attract the esteem of an intelligent being, but as he is also our best friend and most generous benefactor, hence our obligations to gratitude and reciprocal love are quite indisputable. He has purchased our love and gratitude at the dearest price, and has engaged us *to love him* by the most astonishing acts of love and beneficence to us; in so much, that nothing can be more just and equitable than that dreadful denunciation of the Apostle, against all who are insensible to the attractions of a Saviour's love: *If any man, says he, love not the LORD JESUS CHRIST, let him be anathema, maranatha, i. e. let him be accursed, and the LORD will come speedily and execute that curse upon him*.*

The question therefore, is not, *whether* the love of CHRIST to us, should be a motive of ours to him; for this is self-evident? But rather, *in what manner* we may best express our love to our great benefactor? And it is plain, that this is best done by imitation and obedience. It follows therefore,

(2.) THAT the love of CHRIST should constrain us to the *imitation* of him, our beloved Lord and Master. To imitate the beloved object, is a natural and genuine effect of love. We naturally endeavour to imitate those whom we love, especially in those things for which we love them, and by which we hope to commend ourselves to their favour and esteem. Now, as the *moral perfections* of CHRIST, and those divine graces and virtues which shone so conspicuous in him, through the whole of his incarnate state, are one of the principal foundations of our esteem for him; and as the imitation of those virtues and graces serve principally to recommend us to his friendship and regard: So *in these* we will earnestly endeavour to imitate him, if we truly love him. We will endeavour, that the same mind and temper be in us, which was also in CHRIST JESUS*. If we are indeed his *sheep* we will hear his voice and follow him; --- will deny ourselves and take up our cross, learning of him to be meek and lowly, pure and patient, humble and resigned, that, in all things, we may be conformed unto him, and, in so doing, find peace, and rest, and happiness to our souls†.

THE ancient philosophers manifested their love to the leaders of their respective sects, by a *most scrupulous imitation* of them, in the whole tenor of their behavior: And shall we, the disciples of JESUS, be less observant of the most holy and perfect example of our divine

* Phillip. ii. 5.

† Matth. xvi. 24. — xi. 29. John x. 27.

Master, than they were of those of *Zeno* and *Pythagoras*, of *Plato*, and *Aristotle*? Especially, when the Apostle tells us, that *even hereunto are we called; because CHRIST also suffered for us, LEAVING US AN EXAMPLE, THAT WE SHOULD FOLLOW HIS STEPS**. And when another Apostle assures us, that *he who said he abideth in him, or is his disciple, ought himself also so to WALK, even as HE WALKED†*.

(3.) THE love of CHRIST should constrain us, his followers and disciples, to a *cheerful and universal obedience to all his commandments*. And what is this but to *imitate his example*? For, what duty hath he commanded us to perform, of which he hath not given us an example in his own conduct, so far as difference of nature, and circumstances would permit? To obey him, therefore, in his most difficult and self-denying precepts, what is it but to imitate his own example; and to do that out of love and duty for him, which he, in obedience to his Father, hath done for our sakes, and to promote our salvation and happiness? To obey him, therefore, is to imitate him, and to imitate him is to be like him both in holiness and happiness.

THIS is the love of God; says the Apostle, that is, the most certain and substantial evidence of our love to him, *that we keep his commandments†*. And as this is the surest testimony of our love to the Father, so it is also of the Son. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. If a man love me, he will keep my words; but he that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings§." We cheerfully and readily *obey* the person whom we *love*. Duty and inclination here unite their kindred influences; lay-

* 1 Pet. iii. 21.

† 1 John iii. 6.

‡ 1 John v. 3.

§ John xiv. 21, &c.

ing a powerful and irresistible constraint on all the faculties of the soul, and engage them in a course of ready, active, cheerful and universal obedience. Besides, this is the very use which the Apostle makes of the doctrine, in the verse below our text. *CHRIST died for all*, and the principal end of his doing so, was, that those who *spiritually live*, in consequence of his death, *should not henceforth live unto themselves, i. e.* according to the lusts of their own wills, or the dictates of their corrupt hearts; but according to the *law, will, and pleasure of HIM who died for them and rose again*. Hence you see, that the obedience of Christians, is one of the primary ends of *CHRIST'S* death, as well as the highest and surest evidence of their love to him. "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works." And he will be the "Author of eternal salvation only to them that obey him†."

HERE then, Christians, let us bring our love of *CHRIST* to this touch-stone, and try its *sincerity* and its *strength*. Do we love the Lord Jesus *CHRIST* in sincerity? If so, then we study above all things to please him, and dread above all things to offend him;—then we have an exquisite relish for, and delight in his service, and none of his commandments seem grievous to us, but the practice of the most self denying duties is rendered easy and delightful, by that love which is the principle of our obedience;—if so, then his Sabbaths, his house, his ordinances, his glory, honour and interest in the world, his laws and his people, are all of them dear to us, and beloved by us, for the love which we bear unto Jesus; But, and if the contrary of all this is the matter of fact, then the dreadful, tremendous conclusion is, That the *love of the Father abideth not in us*, and that we love not the Lord Jesus *CHRIST* in sincerity!

† Tit. ii. 12. Heb. v. 9.

2. UPON us, who are the Ministers of his everlasting gospel, the love of CHRIST ought to have a mighty constraint. . As Christians, we lie under the same obligations of love, gratitude, imitation and obedience with others. We lie involved in the same common ruin with the rest of our guilty race ;---have *ourselves to save*, as well as *them who bear us*, and, therefore, have the same obligations to CHRIST for his great salvation, and have the same motives and necessity with others to *work out our own salvation with fear and trembling*, and to *give all diligence to make our calling and election sure*.

BESIDES, the whole tenor and all the duties of our sacred office, tend directly to beget and cherish (so far as instrumental means can) the habits of holiness and universal obedience in our souls ; and therefore, perhaps, lays us under higher obligations to an exemplary piety than others who enjoy not the same advantages. As Christian Ministers, our obligations *rise and multiply*. We are surrounded, as it were, and pressed on every side, with a vast variety of the most cogent arguments and powerful motives to *zeal, ardour and diligence* in the discharge of our ministry. We are debtors both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, to the *wise and the unwise*. " A dispensation of the gospel is committed unto us, a necessity is laid upon us, and wo unto us, if we preach not the gospel ; if we be not instant in season and out of season ; reproving, rebuking, exhorting with all long-suffering and doctrine*."

THE love of CHRIST constraineth us---*charity and universal benevolence to the souls of men* constrain us---our *ordination vows* constrain us---the *blood of souls will be upon us*, if we are unfaithful or remiss : But if, on the other hand, we are *wise to win souls to CHRIST* ;---if we are faithful and successful in our office, important

* Rom. i. 14. 1 Cor. ix. 16. 2 Tim. iv. 2.

will be our services among men, and great and glorious our reward in heaven. If we *turn many unto righteousness*, we shall *shine as the brightness of the firmament*, and *as the stars for ever and ever*; we shall deliver immortal souls from perdition, and increase the number of the blessed, and the *hallelujahs* of the redeemed. By the conversion of sinners, we shall *give joy in heaven*, enlarge the Redeemer's kingdom, and promote his interest among men;---we shall weaken the kingdom of *satan*; defeat his malice; counteract his destructive designs, and lessen the number of his unhappy subjects. And, finally, every soul whom we are happily instrumental in saving, will be a new gem in our diadem of glory, a fresh accession to our everlasting joy and happiness, on that memorable and important day, when the LORD shall "make up his jewels, and give unto every man according to his works, and to the deeds done in the body."

ANIMATED therefore by these glorious hopes; fired by these important prospects; urged and pressed, as it were, on every side, with these almighty motives and considerations, well might the love of CHRIST, the love of souls, and a sense of duty and obligation, constrain the Apostles;---well may they constrain us their unworthy successors, to the most ardent zeal and unwearied diligence in promoting the glory of God, the interest of CHRIST, and the salvation of sinners;---well may they cause us to look down with sovereign contempt on that *fear* and *favour* of men, which bring a snare, in the discharge of our duty, and engage us to be steadfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the LORD, knowing that our labour shall not be in vain in him;---well may they steel and fortify our hearts against all the opposition of *men* and *devils*, and cause us to cry out, with our steadfast, magnanimous Apostle, in the face of bonds, imprisonments and death itself,---

"None of these things move us, neither count we our
 "lives dear unto ourselves, so that we might finish
 "our course with joy, and the ministry which we have
 "received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of
 "the grace of God*."

WHEN the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls was
 about to ascend into heaven, he *thrice* interrogated Pe-
 ter in the same terms; "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest
 "thou me more than these?" To which, when the
 great Apostle had *thrice* answered in the affirmative;
 "Yea, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest
 "that I love thee." His Lord charged him to testi-
 fy his love to him, by *feeding his lambs and his sheep*†.
 Do we therefore love the Lord Jesus CHRIST? Let us
 give proof of our love, by feeding his lambs and his
 sheep, and nourishing up in the words of faith and
 sound doctrine, those souls whom he hath redeemed with
 his precious blood. And O that they who hear us
 might learn to be wise to salvation; that, laying aside
 all malice, and guile, and hypocrisies, and evil-speak-
 ings, as new-born babes, they might desire the sincere
 milk of the word, and grow thereby. Amen and
 Amen.

* Acts xx. 24.

† John xxi. 15, &c.

Most of these things move us, neither count we our
 lives dear to ourselves, and the ministry which we have
 received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of
 the word of God.

ESSAY LX.

CHRISTIANS, LIGHTS IN THE WORLD,

OR, THE

BEAUTY and EXCELLENCY of the CHRISTIAN LIFE:

A S E R M O N

F R O M

PHILIPPIANS II. 15, 16.

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.

THE Christian character, *my brethren*, is a most lovely and *amiable* character; although alas! it is a most *rare* and *uncommon* one in the world, even in the *Christian world*, where, as all are Christians by *name* and *profession*, so all ought to be such in *deed* and in *truth*. "He is not a Jew, (says the Apostle) who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew which is one

“inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of man but of God*.”—So may we say with regard to *christianity*: ‘He is not a Christian who is one merely in name and outward profession; but he only who has the *heart*, the *spirit*, the *temper*, the *principles*, and the *conduct* of a Christian, whose praise is not of *man* only, but of God also.’ To be Christians *indeed* and in *reality*, *my brethren*, is to be lights in the world, to be harmless and blameless; unrebukeable and unreprieveable, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. And not only so; not merely to be thus *negatively* good; but also *positively* so; shining as lights to direct others in the way of life and happiness—*Holding forth the word of life*—Holding forth our good examples, as luminous torches or flambeaus, to conduct the feet of erring, wandering, benighted travellers, into the path of peace and felicity.

As *natural light* is the most pleasing and comfortable object to the eye and to the mind;—as it reveals all natural objects to us;—directs our steps in this world;—points out the dangers of our way, and enables us to distinguish between that which is pleasant and eligible, and that which is hurtful and pernicious. “For truly, (as Solomon observes) the light is sweet, and “a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun†.” So *truth* and *virtue*, which answer much the same purposes in the *moral* and *intellectual* worlds, as material light does in the *natural*, are beautifully termed the *light of the mind*, in a figurative and metaphorical sense. Hence also, God, the great source and exemplar of all truth and virtue, is called *light*. “God is light, and “in him there is no darkness at all.” And CHRIST, who is the “brightness of the Father’s glory, and

* Rom. ii. 28, 29.

† Eccles. xi. 17.

"the expresse image of his person," is called, by way of eminence, "The light of the world ;---and that light which lighteth every man which cometh into the world." The scriptures also, which are the purest channels of truth and virtue to a benighted world, are called, "Lights in a dark place ;---a light to our feet, and a lamp or lanthorn to our paths."

AGREEABLE to all this ;---when sinners are *converted*, or turned from *error* and *vice*, to *truth* and *virtue*, they are said to have *their eyes opened* ; their *understandings enlightened*, and to be *brought from darkness to light*, and from the power of *satan* to *God* : And *God* is said to *bring them out of darkness into his marvellous light*. "Ye were sometime darkness, (says the Apostle) but now are ye light in the Lord."

AND hence, true Christians are called *children of the light*,---and commanded to *walk in the light* ; to *shine as lights in the world*,---and to *let their light so shine before men, that others, seeing their good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven*.

To be a *true Christian*, therefore, *my brethren*, is to sustain the *most honourable* and *beautiful* of all characters : ---It is to *imitate* and *resemble* *God*, who is the great source and fountain of light, and in whom there is no darkness at all ;---to *imitate* and *resemble* *CHRIST*, who is the *light of the world*, and the *life of men* ;---to *imitate* and *resemble* the *saints*, those brave and generous souls, who, in all ages, have copied after *God*, and shone as lights in the world, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, holding forth the word of life.---To be *true Christians*, is to be as like to the glorious *God*, both in virtue and happiness,---and to do as much good to our fellow-creatures in our day and generation, as possibly we can :---in a word, to be as lovely, as venerable, as virtuous, as holy, as

happy and as useful, as the capacities of our limited, depraved nature will permit.

ST. PAUL had founded a church in *Philippi*, which worshipped the true God, and received the LORD JESUS CHRIST, while many of their brethren and fellow-citizens, still continued in their idolatry and infidelity. It was, therefore, the desire and ambition of the good Apostle, that the converted *Philippians* should labour for the conversion of their heathen brethren. He desired that the unbelieving and idolatrous *Philippians*, (who were attentive and malicious observers of their Christian brethren, because of the new religion they had embraced, and the new kind of life they had devoted themselves to) should see nothing in them, but what was *wise, reputable, and of good report*; and *such as becometh the gospel of CHRIST*.

THIS, however, it seems had not been the case, so much as the good Apostle wished. These *young converts* although they had broke off from the idolatry and infidelity of their neighbours, yet were still of very imperfect characters, in point of morality:--Although they had embraced the profession of Christianity; yet they had not fully imbib'd its spirit and temper. However sound they might be in *faith*, yet they lacked that *charity*, which is the bond of *perfectness*, and without which true Christianity, cannot either *live or move* or have *its being*. No sooner had they broke off from their unbelieving and idolatrous brethren, than they began to quarrel among themselves. This seems to have been the true ground and motive, of the Apostle's noble and excellent exhortation, in our text; which will ever be equally useful, and equally applicable, while Christianity has a being in a corrupt, imperfect, world and state.

“Do all things, (says the Apostle) without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without, &c.”

IN the words, we have *three* things observable, and which shall (through the divine assistance) be the subject of the present discourse.

I. THE *post* or *station* of a Christian in this world. He lives "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation;" who are, at heart, enemies to that holiness which he professes; who will be close and malicious observers of all his conduct; and who are capable of being either greatly benefited, or greatly hurt by his example and conversation.

II. WE have the *Christian's destination* in this world; what divine providence designs he should be; or what purpose he is designed to serve, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. He is to *shine as a light in the world*: *Holding forth the word of life*,---that he may serve the double purpose of both saving himself and others.

III. WE have the *duty of a Christian* in this world, in order to his answering this destination of providence: "He is to be *harmless* and *blameless*; a *child of God*, *without rebuke*;" that the gospel may not be blamed; that sinners may be converted, and that his Christian brethren may be edified: In a word, "He is to let this light of his so shine before men, that others, seeing his good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven."

ARE there any amongst us, *my brethren*, who have the noble ambition, not only of obtaining this heavenly felicity ourselves, but also of leading others in the same road? Are there any amongst us, who have the noble ambition of concurring with JESUS CHRIST in the work of human redemption? Let such learn, to

day, from St. Paul, to prosecute so noble a design by shining as lights in the world ; by being *harmless and blameless* as the *children of God*, *without rebuke*, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. May the holy Spirit himself inspire us with this divine ambition ---and may the blessing of God, attending this discourse, give us power and spirit to pursue so noble a design, until our endeavours are crowned with heavenly glory.---Amen.

I. THEN we are briefly to consider the *post and station* of a true Christian in this world :—" He lives in the " *midst of a crooked and perverse generation.*"

THIS sentiment and expression of the Apostle might be easily *justified and illustrated*, by considering the *religion and morals* of the *Jews and Heathens*, amongst which the primitive Christians lived, to whom he here writes. The character which our Saviour and his Apostles have left us on record, both of the Jews and Gentiles of that age, (and which is abundantly confirmed by contemporary writers) makes it appear, that they were, indeed, " a crooked and perverse generation."

THE *Jews* had scarcely the very shadow of religion left amongst them in that abandoned age. The measure of their iniquity seems then to have been *filled*, and they were *ripe for destruction*. To the *Pharisees*, the " most *numerous* and respectable sect amongst them, our Saviour thus addresses himself---" Ye serpents, ye " generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell ?" And, as to the *Sadducees*, they were men of *atheistical principles*, and detestable morals.

FOR the *morals and manners* of the *Heathens*, of that time, and into what a state of luxury, debauchery, and universal corruption they had degenerated, I might refer you to their own historians, moralists and satyrists : But that portrait which this Apostle himself has given

us of the *Romans*, one of the most learned, philosophical, and civilized Heathen nations, shall suffice in lieu of every other authority.—“Being filled (says the Apostle) with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; vile in their affections; changing the truth of God into a lie; and worshipping and serving the creature more than the CREATOR, who is God over all, blessed for ever*.” What a black catalogue of vices is this? And was not that a “crooked and perverse generation,” indeed, of which this was the general and prevailing character?

BUT, *my brethren*, we need not go back to antiquity, to justify and illustrate this observation of the Apostle. In every age of the world, God’s true church and people, “live in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.”

THE Apostle is still addressing every Christian amongst us, in the words of our text, with equal propriety as he did his converts at *Philippi*—“Be ye harmless and blameless, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, amongst whom ye shine as lights in the world.” The world, as distinguished from the church, ever has been, and ever will be, “a crooked and perverse generation.” This world has been ever distinguished into two grand classes of men, diametrically opposite in their principles, ends, motives, dispositions and manners, and generally distinguished in scripture by the appellation of the ‘world, and the church;—the seed of the woman, and

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* Rom. i. 21,--34.

‘ seed of the serpent ;—the sheep and the goats ;—the
 ‘ tares and the wheat ;—the righteous and the wicked ;
 ‘ —the children of this world, and the children of
 ‘ light.’ If we attentively read the scriptures, we will
 find that the word world, is generally used to repre-
 sent the worst of these two classes.—“ The world (says
 “ St. *John*) lieth in wickedness.—The world (says he)
 “ knoweth us not.—Love not the world, neither the
 “ things that are in the world. If any man love the
 “ world, the love of the Father is not in him : For
 “ all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the
 “ lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the
 “ Father, but of the world.” St. *James* tells us,
 “ that the friendship of the world is enmity with
 “ God ;” and therefore beseeches Christians, *to keep*
themselves unspotted from the world. St. *Paul* tells us,
 that “ the LORD JESUS CHRIST gave himself for our
 “ sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil
 “ world, according to the will of God ;”—and there-
 fore earnestly beseeches Christians *not to be conformed*
to this world, in its manners, customs, spirit or maxims,
 but *to be transformed by the renewing of their minds.*
 “ If the world hate you (says CHRIST to his disciples)
 “ ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If
 “ ye were of the world, the world would love his own ;
 “ but because ye are not of the world, but I have
 “ chose you out of the world, therefore the world hat-
 “ eth you.”

It were easy, *my brethren,* to multiply quotations to
 this purpose ; but surely evidence enough has been
 produced to prove, that the world, in which Christians
 live ; or, that that company of men with which the
 church is contrasted, and from which it is distinguish-
 ed every where in scripture, is “ a crooked and per-
 “ verse generation.”

THE *same truth* will evidently appear from the *general maxims* and *prevailing manners* of the world, by which the crookedness and perverseness of their sentiments and conduct will be clearly manifested. Will either the dictates of enlightened reason, the best interests of society, or the *gospel of CHRIST*, justify such maxims as the following:—‘Youth is the proper season for pleasure and gallantry:—It is ridiculous to make much ado about religion:—We should not aspire to be saints:—All that religion requires of us, is to be just and honest in our dealings:---Calumny and ridicule are the salt or zest of conversation:---It is unworthy of a man of honour to put up with an affront. Revenge is sweet:—Ambition is the vice of noble souls:---Impurity is intollerable in women, but pardonable in men, We should be conformed to the world, and act agreeable to its maxims.’---Which of these my friends, (and a great many more might be added to the number) does not flatly contradict some precept of CHRIST, and the very spirit and genius of Christianity?---And yet which of these maxims is not received in society as a first principle, against the truth of which, it would be deemed affectation to dispute?

AND are not the *prevailing manners* of the world, exactly conformable to *these maxims*?---How few regard even the solemnity of an oath, where interest is concerned?---What faith is, now a days, to be put in the promises or professions of men? The very form of religion is in such sovereign contempt, that it is deemed highly impolite to introduce even the mention of it into company. How few in Christian countries, comparatively speaking, attend the ordinances of CHRIST, or pay any regard to the public worship of GOD?—What are the lives of the generality, but a course of mere extravagance, sensuality, and dissipation—of enquiry how they may provide for the flesh, to fulfil the

lusts thereof---what they shall eat, or drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed, without a single serious thought about the state of their souls, or eternity? If we enquire into the source of mirth and pleasantry in most companies, shall we not find the laugh almost perpetually raised, either at the expence of religion, or at the natural or moral failings and infirmities of our fellow-creatures? Subjects which drew tears from the eyes of *David*, and which no right mind can contemplate, without pain and anxiety! Indeed, what is modern wit and gaiety, but calumny, slander and profanity, rendered laughable, by the ludicrous garb in which they are dressed?---To all this, may I not add, that some of the most scandalous and filthy vices are become so common and fashionable in Christian countries, that to resist or decline them, would be deemed an almost unpardonable singularity.

SURELY nothing more need be added to prove, That the *world* in which Christians live, is “a crooked and “perverse generation;”---that to follow the multitude, is to renounce the guidance of reason and religion; and that to be conformed to this evil world, in its general customs, maxims and manners, is to imitate the very worst examples, and to forfeit all that glory and happiness which the gospel has set before us. I am now to lay before you, under the

II. HEAD of discourse, *The Christian's destination in this evil world; or, what purposes he is designed and appointed to serve in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.*---“He is to shine as a light in the world, “holding forth the word of life.” Upon such a view of things, Christians may possibly say, ‘Since *such* ‘is the world in which we live;---since human society ‘is so empoisoned and corrupted, let us shun the contagion:---Let us break off all commerce with the

‘ living :—Let us abandon the society of men, and, like
 ‘ hermits, secure our innocence in obscurity and retire-
 ‘ ment, in the solitude of deserts and caves of the earth.’
 By no means, says St. *Paul*. Man is a social creature,
 and is designed for society : Flee not, therefore, from
 the destination of Providence : Continue in that world
 where the example of your virtue is so necessary : La-
 bour to disabuse and undeceive your fellow-mortals,
 and to prevent them, if possible, from falling into mise-
 ry : Let your life, your conversation, and your whole
 deportment, be a reproach to their vices, and a light
 to direct their feet into the paths of peace, holiness and
 happiness : ‘ Shine as lights in the world ; holding
 ‘ forth, in your example and behaviour, the word of
 ‘ life, for the direction and instruction of others.’

THE Greek word, which we translate *light*, has a pe-
 culiar energy in the text. It is compounded of two
 words, which signify *an elevated light*, or a *light held up*,
 for the guidance and direction of others. The Apostle
 probably alludes to the ancient *Pharos*, a tower or *light-
 house*, built by *Ptolemy Philadelphus*, on an island of the
 same name, in the mouth of the river *Nile* in *Egypt*, on
 the top of which a fire was kept continually kindled in
 the night, to direct vessels into the harbour. The al-
 lusion, *my brethren*, is very plain and very beautiful.
 The Christian serves as a *guide* and *director* to a crook-
 ed and perverse generation. Elevated above the false
 maxims and corrupt manners of the world, he holds
 forth before him the word of life ; *i. e.* he *shows* and
manifests, by his example, *that* which the word of God
 demands of us, in order to our entering into life e-
 ternal.

THE *word of God* is termed*, “ A light to our feet
 “ and a lamp to our paths,” because it gives us direc-
 tion in the whole of our conduct. When our temporal

* Psal. cxix. 105.

and eternal interests clash and interfere with each other, it puts that important and significant question, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" In the time of affliction, it calls us to *consider*, "and to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt us in due season."—Under the influence of riches and prosperity, it directs us, "not to trust in uncertain riches:—to be rich in the good works of charity and liberality—to be good stewards of the manifold grace of God; willing to distribute; ready to communicate;—To make unto ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when we fail here, they may receive us into everlasting habitations."—On a death-bed, and in the near prospect of eternity, it is a light to our feet, and a lamp to our paths—by representing death as a *conquered disarmed* tyrant;—by opening an eternal world of glory to the faith of the Christian;—by assuring him, that when "his heart and his flesh fail, God will be the strength of his heart and his portion for ever;---that blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord, for they do rest from their labour and their works do follow them."

Now, that which *David* says of the *word of God*, *St. Paul* here says of the *destination of the Christian*. As God hath given his word to be a light to men's feet and a lamp to their paths,—to guide their feet into the way of peace and happiness,—so he hath also destined and appointed Christians, "to shine as lights in the world, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation."—practically *holding forth*, and *exemplifying* the word of life, for their guidance and direction.

THE Christian's life and conversation should be the word of God reduced to practice; a living comment on the word of life; so that the ignorant and wicked

world, who either cannot or will not read the word of God, may see it clearly held forth, and plainly exemplified in the life of the Christian. And indeed, *my brethren*, what have the lives of the saints been, in all ages, but just a *holding forth of this word of life*? They have preached more powerfully and more effectually, by their lives and examples, than their doctrines, to those crooked and perverse generations, among whom they shone as lights in the world. God hath *set them up*, in every age and generation, as *beacons* and *Pharos*es, to stem the torrent of human depravity and corruption;—to shew the practicability of virtue in human nature;—to be a reproof and reproach to prevailing vice and immorality, causing iniquity, as ashamed, to hide its face,—and to allure mankind into the paths of virtue and happiness.

WOULD we see, for instance, the preference which the interests of *eternity* should have to those of *time*; let us behold it exemplified in the conduct of Moses, “Who refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of CHRIST greater riches than the treasures of *Egypt*, because he had respect to the recompence of reward.”—In the lives of *Abraham* and *Joshua*, we have the noblest examples of pious masters of families: “As for me,” (says *Joshua*) and my house, we will serve the Lord.” “For I know *Abraham*, (says God) that he will command his children, and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord, and to do justice and judgment*.”—In King *David*, the most fervent piety and animated devotion shine forth conspicuously.—*Job* taught the world, in his day, that *dutiful submission*

* Gen. xvii. 19. Josh. xxiv. 15.

entire resignation, which we owe to the will of God in times of the deepest calamity and affliction; "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil also; the LORD giveth, and the LORD taketh away, and blessed be the name of the LORD*." In *Zaccheus* we have a bright example of the proper use of riches, and the great duty of restitution;—"Behold, LORD, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man, by false accusation, I restore him four-fold†." And in the life of *St. Paul* himself, we have exemplified a whole constellation of Christian virtues and duties;---the most exemplary humility, patience and self-denial;---unparalleled zeal and diligence in promoting the glory of God, and the salvation of men,---and the most earnest desire "of being absent from the body and present with the LORD."---All these answered the designation of divine providence, and fulfilled this positive and active part of their Christian calling:---All these were *burning and shining lights* in the world; holding forth the word of life to those *crooked and perverse generations*, among whom divine providence had stationed and placed them.

NOR, *my brethren*, was *this duty peculiar* to these *great lights* of the *ancient world*; it is equally the duty, the honour and the interest of every individual Christian to the end of time, to be a *burning and a shining light* in his day and generation, and thus to *hold forth the word of life*, to the crooked and perverse generation, among whom he is stationed by divine providence.

MANY Christians, indeed, are not able to *build churches*, to *found hospitals*, to *preach* or defend the gospel, or to propagate it to distant parts of the world:---but every Christian is surely able to live a good,

* Job i. 21.---ii. 10.

† Luke xix. 8.

virtuous and exemplary life.—Every Christian is able “to adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour,” to exhibit the virtues and graces of genuine Christianity ;—to encourage virtue and piety, and discountenance vice and immorality as far as his influence and example can reach. And this is every Christian’s duty : “ Let your light, (says CHRIST, the great Lord and Law-giver of Christians) so shine before men, that others seeing your good works, may glorify your Father in heaven.—Be ye harmless and blameless, (says the Apostle) the children of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.—Have your conversation honest among the Gentiles ; (says St. Peter) having a good conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in CHRIST—and may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

THESE scriptures, *my brethren*, while they point out the duty of Christians, also shew the propriety and expediency of it. It is proper, it is fit and expedient, that Christians should maintain and preserve an immaculate and exemplary character---that the gospel may not be blamed ;---that their profession may not be disgraced ;---that sinners may be reclaimed, and that the church may be edified. They owe this duty to God, to themselves, to the Church, and to that crooked and perverse generation, among whom God hath placed them as *lights*, to hold forth the word of life.

THIS is the *positive part* of the Christian’s duty. He is to be *actively holy* and *exemplary*, in all manner of life and conversation ; and that, not merely from the selfish and contracted view of securing his own salvation ;---but also, from the more *catholic* and *charitable* motive of promoting the salvation of his fellow men ;

that he may prosecute the noble and God-like design of saving both himself and those who behold his good conversation in Christ. — Proceed we now,

III. To the *negative* duty of a Christian, in order to his answering this destination of providence. "He is to live harmless and blameless, as the child of God, without rebuke."

These words must be understood *here* (as indeed every where else in scripture when applied to men) not in their most rigid and strictly literal meaning, as implying a *sinless perfection*. For, alas! in this sense, there is not a just man upon earth, who doeth good and sineth not. In many things we all offend: "And if we say we have *no sin*, we are *liars* and the *truth is not in us*." They must therefore be understood in a *qualified sense*, as only implying *gospel sincerity* and *evangelical righteousness*. "Be ye harmless, blameless and irreproachable as the children of God," that is, pay a *constant regard* to the laws of that great Master whom you serve, so far as human weakness and infirmity will permit; and let it appear evidently even by the very nature of those failings and shortcomings which the weakness and imperfection of your nature sometimes betrays you into, that your sins are not *deliberate and allowed*, proceeding from a *spirit of rebellion*; but arising wholly from the *weakness and infirmity* of your nature, in the present imperfect state. It is said emphatically of the *wicked*, "They have corrupted themselves; their spot is not the spot of God's children; they are a perverse and crooked generation." God's *children*, it seems, have *their spots*; but they are not the spots of the wicked. They sin not cordially, presumptuously, allowedly, nor perseveringly. They love holiness and

* Deut. xxxii. 5.

to pursue it, as far as the weakness and infirmity of their nature will permit. It is their honest and hearty endeavour, "to be harmless and blameless, the children of God, without rebuke;" and with the charitable and right-thinking part of mankind, they generally obtain a good report, an irreproachable character. A real Christian can join Job, with some sincerity, in saying: "I will not remove my integrity from me; my righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." And what was predicated of Job, may, with some propriety, be said of him; "That he is a perfect man, and an upright one; who feareth God and escheweth evil." It will be his great ambition and earnest endeavour, as a child of God, not only to imbibe the temper and disposition of a child, crying Abba Father; but also to imitate his heavenly Father in all those virtues and graces which constitute his moral character, being *holy* as God is *holy*, *pure* as he is *pure*, and *merciful* as he is *merciful*, in all manner of life and conversation.

IN VAIN, my fellow Christians, do we assume the character of being the children of God. In vain are we the expectants of a glorious immortality, in consequence of this assumed character; and, in vain do we impose on a credulous world, by this hollow and hypocritical profession, while we are unlike our heavenly Father in the temper of our minds, and the conduct of our lives; while, instead of being *harmless*, *blameless*, *unrebukeable* and *exemplary*, we continue to be a *perverse* and *crooked* generation, and have lives and conversations all blurr'd over with the spots of the wicked. Indignant heaven must justly spurn such affrontive insolence; and that omniscient God, who requires truth in the heart, and sincerity in the inward part, will appoint us our portion with hypocrites, where

shall be weeping and walling, and gnashing of teeth. But I have already trespassed too long on your patience, and shall beg leave to conclude, by addressing my most tender exhortations to *two sorts of persons*: And, 1st, To such of you, *my brethren*, who, by your Christian profession, and by a correspondent exemplary life, have the honour of shining as lights, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, holding forth the word of life.

I call you, my brethren, to consider the *grand* and *sublime* of your Christian character and calling. When St. Paul would animate his son Timothy to a zealous discharge of the duties of his ministry, he tells him, "Take heed unto thy self, and unto thy doctrine: for, in doing this, thou shalt both save thy self, and them that hear thee." He makes him a kind of subordinate saviour; a fellow-labourer and fellow-worker with CHRIST, in the glorious work of human redemption.

But what Timothy did by his ministry, every Christian is called, in our text, to do by his *example*. If, indeed, *my brethren*, you are "harmless and blameless, as the children of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shall shine as lights, in the world, holding forth the word of life," you shall not only *save yourselves*, but also I be highly instrumental in *saving others*. And oh! what an *honour*, what a blessedness is this!—In pursuing this design, you enter into the plan of redemption, and partake of the honours of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Redeemer;—you do a *work* the most pleasing to God; the most profitable to yourselves, and the most beneficial to your fellow-creatures:—A *work* which employed the counsels of God from all eternity; and a *work*, on which he lavished (if I may so speak

with reverence) the life and blood of his dear Son; It means, the salvation of poor mortals.

By *this divine and God-like labour of love*, you are also brightning your immortal crowns and doubling your eternal rewards. "For what is our hopes, (says *St. Paul* to the *Thessalonians*) or our joy, or our crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our *LORD JESUS CHRIST*, at his coming? For ye are our glory and our joy."---In like manner, *my brethren*, those souls, to whose salvation you have contributed, by your virtuous and pious examples, will be your crown, your joy, and your glory, through eternal ages. In those regions of perfect love, you will be happy, not only in seeing the happiness of those whom you loved here, but also in having promoted their eternal happiness;—in having preserved them from the contagion of the age;—in having recovered them from a crooked and perverse generation, and in having snatched them as brands from the burning.—And O! my friends, can there be any difficulty unconquerable—any virtue too severe—any self-denial too painful with such motives as these before your eyes? Is it possible, that any frivolous pleasure, or trifling emolument of sin, should have power or influence enough to rob you of this glory, this joy, and this crown of rejoicing? I would,

2. *BEG* leave to address myself in a few words, to such as are unhappy enough still to make a part of that crooked and perverse generation, amidst whom the few righteous shine as lights in the world.

My unhappy fellow-sinners! Let me beseech you in the spirit of *love and meekness*, to enter into the views of providence, who has set those eminent examples of virtue and piety before your eyes! For what reason hath God, the Father of mercies, kindled up so many *burning and shining lights* in this world of his—Men of

our own nature and make, adorned with so many conspicuous virtues—who have been ornaments to human nature, and benefactors to the world. Is it only that we should behold them with an eye of *envy* and *contempt*? Is it only that we should blacken their characters, and pursue them with calumny and slander; thus aggravating our own guilt and condemnation? Is it not that we should emulate their virtues, imitate their examples, and be corrected, reformed and instructed by their manners? Let us *blush* to think that men of the same common nature with ourselves; composed of the same flesh and blood; animated with the same passions, and born heirs of the same corruptions and infirmities, should have yet so far outstripped us, in every thing *noble*, *God-like*, *rational* and *divine*?—Are not the same succours, the same promises of aid and assistance, the same sources of grace, virtue and holiness, open to us, as were to *Abraham*, to *Moses*, to *Job*, to *Elijah*, to *Paul*; and as are to all the good, the virtuous, the pious, and exemplary, of this as well as every foregoing age? Wherefore then do we not avail ourselves of these advantages?—Is there any assignable reason why any of our fellow-creatures should outdo us in any thing *amiable*, *lovely*, *virtuous*, *praise-worthy*, and of good report? Why any of our fellow-men should excel us in the care of their own souls, or of the souls of their fellow-creatures? “The saints, are the excellent ones of the earth, in whom should be all our delight:” Let us respect their virtues: Let us cherish their acquaintance: Let us love their society, and follow their examples. Too, too long have we scandalized the church, it is now time we should edify it. Too, too long have we laboured for the destruction of our fellow-men, it is now time we should labour for their conversion and salvation.

Too, too long have we been joined to this crooked and
 perverse generation; ~~this world which lies in wickedness.~~
 It is now time we should shine as lights in the world,
 holding forth the word of life, for the guidance and
 direction of those whom our bypast evil examples have
 perverted and confirmed in their wickedness.
 To conclude in one word: Let me address that ex-
 hortation to all of you, my dear hearers, which St. Peter
 addressed to the Jews:—"Save yourselves from this
 untoward generation."—"Deliver yourselves from
 their principles, maxims, customs and manners; from their
 sins and from their judgments."—"Make haste, flee for
 your lives, lest ye perish." May God, the merciful
 Father of our spirits, give weight to this exhortation,
 and set it home powerfully upon each of our consci-
 ences; and to his great name shall be the eternal
 praise, through JESUS CHRIST our only Lord and Re-
 deemer. Amen and Amen.

E S S A Y L X I.

T H E

AGGRAVATED GUILT OF MURDER;

A

S E R M O N

F R O M

E x o d u s XX. 13.

Thou shalt not kill.

IT may perhaps be deemed a little unseasonable and impolite to handle a subject of this kind, before a civilized and christianized assembly. Methinks, I hear some of my hearers object, and say, ' You pay us but a rude and unwelcome compliment, by even supposing us capable of committing such an atrocious and unnatural crime as this. Murder! The shedding of innocent blood! Our blood runs chill, and freezes at the very thought of it. No; God forbid! Our hearts are too tender and humane ever to harbour such a design, or listen to such a temptation!'

THERE was a time, *my hearers*, when most murderers could doubtless have said all this, with as much *confidence* and *sincerity* as any of us now can, and when

their very souls would have shuddered at the thoughts of committing so great a wickedness. But there was also a time when the increased strength of their corruptions hurried them on to commit it with greediness, and under the most aggravated circumstances of guilt.

ALAS! we little know the *deceitfulness* and *desperate wickedness* of our own hearts, or the *depth* and *inveteracy* of our corruptions, when we imagine ourselves above the danger or possibility of committing the greatest and most atrocious crimes. "The heart, (says the prophet) is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it? It starts aside like a broken bow*."

WE look upon murder, (and justly) as the most atrocious crime which can be committed by man---we have no compassion for the persons of murderers, but regard them as *monsters of iniquity*, who have even no claim to *human pity*:---But I am persuaded, *my friends*, that nothing but the restraining grace of God, prevents multitudes, who are thus *merciless* in their judgment of others, from committing the very same crime. 'Cruel man!--Thou hast no mercy on thy fellow-sinner!'
'---Thou thinkest him unworthy the pity either of God or man!--Thou deemest it impossible for thee to fall into the same wickedness!--Yet thou art proud, imperious, intolerant and unforgiving! Yet thy soul often boils, ferments, and rankles with the passions of anger, fury, revenge, envy and malice prepense against thy neighbour! Yet thou prayest for his damnation, and devisest evil against him, and wishest him dead, because he stands in the way of some gratification, or has wounded thy imaginary honour, or hurt thy pride! Be it known unto thee, O blind and merciless man, that thou art the very murderer whom thou condemnest without pity; and that nothing but some

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* Jer. xvii. 9.

'prudential motive, or rather, the *restraining grace of* God, bridling thine outrageous passions, for the safety and security of human society, prevents thee from perpetrating the very fact thyself, which thou thinkest unpardonable in another.'

Thou shalt not kill, says God.

It would be paying a bad compliment to the understandings of my hearers, to take up much of your time in shewing you---That there are many circumstances, wherein the taking away of human life, is not to be deemed *sinful or criminal*;---such as *chance-medley*, when one man takes away the life of another, by *mere accident*, without any *knowledge or design* in the action;---or *man-slaughter*, on one's own defence, when a man from a principle of *self-preservation*, is, as it were, compelled to take away the life of another who assaults him unprovoked, in order to save his own. The same also happens in a *lawful, defensive war*, when men are forced to destroy an invading enemy, in defence of their own lives, liberties and properties;---or, *lastly*, when men have forfeited their lives, by such crimes as essentially affect the public good and safety, and which are adjudged worthy of death, by laws *human and divine*. In all these cases, and perhaps in some others, the taking away of human life, is so far from being criminal, that it may be a duty which we owe to God, our neighbour and ourselves!

THE crime therefore *here* forbidden by God, and which is emphatically expressed in the English language by the word murder, is the *shedding of innocent blood*;---or 'wilfully and feloniously killing of another, upon premeditated malice; whether secretly or openly; whether ourselves, or by others.' And this premeditated malice, is either, (1.) Express, when it may be evidently proved, that there was ill-will;---or, (2.) Implied; when one kills another suddenly, having no

thing to defend himself: For, in such a case, the law justly presumes, that there must have been *malice*.--- To this may also be added, the atrocious crime of *suicide*, or a man's laying violent hands upon himself;--- as also, *duelling*, which contains in it the essence and guilt of both the above crimes.

In farther improving this subject, I shall, I. *A little* expose the heinous and aggravated guilt of murder.--- II. Shew you that it is a crime justly punishable by death.--- III. Endeavour to expose those *passions, tempers and practices* which lead to it. I am,

I. A LITTLE to open and *expose* the *heinous* and *aggravated* guilt of murder. And this may be shown 1st, From the very *nature* and *consequences* of the crime itself; and, 2dly, From the light in which both the *word of God*, and the *consciences of men* represent it. And,

1. FROM the very nature and consequences of the crime itself. (1.) Man is fearfully and wonderfully made; *made*, we are told, in the *image* and *likeness* of God. Man is God's offspring and *representative* on this earth. His body is, perhaps, the noblest piece of divine workmanship; and God, when he had made it, breathed into it the breath of life, and made it a *living* and *intelligent image* of himself! Now to break to pieces this *living temple*;---to *deface, undo*, and, as much as in us is, *wantonly to destroy* this workmanship of God;---to separate this soul and body whom God hath joined together;---to disunite and take down this tabernacle, which God hath built and set up, by a miracle of his power, wisdom and goodness;---what a *daring* crime? What an *audacious* wickedness? All our power, wisdom and contrivance cannot give *form, existence* or *life* to a worm; and shall we dare to destroy

a fellow-man? Shall we presume to take away in the wantonness of our pride and passion, that which all the powers on earth, and all the angels in heaven cannot give?

(2.) THAT GOD *makes nothing in vain*, is a maxim not to be disputed. Who knows the destiny of a human creature, or for what purposes Providence may have designed him? Presumptuous, short-sighted mortals that we are, we are apt to pronounce a being worthless and useless, on whom his Maker may set much value, and by whom he may do great things! When we see *Saul persecuting the church*, and assisting in the stoning of *Stephen*, we may adjudge him worthy of death, and think the world would be well rid of such a monster; yet this very *Saul* was a *chosen vessel*, who was to proselyte half the Roman empire to *Jesus*! How many wicked and worthless men, have become benefactors to the world and ornaments to humanity!

How many pests to human society have become fathers of children, who have done honour to human nature, and become the saviours of their country?—This should teach us not to despise the meanest of the creatures of God, or the wickedest of men, who are still in a place of repentance. But the murderer does what in him lies to defeat the designs of God's providence, and cut off the purposes of his will. True, he can never effect this: "God's counsel shall stand, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations: For there is neither wisdom or device, or counsel against the Lord!"—Yet no thanks to the murderer for this—who, in the rage and wantonness of his passion, cuts off a human creature, who, for all he knew or considered, might have been appointed by God to answer the noblest purposes, and to bring about the noblest designs in the world!

CRUEL and inhuman mother!--Knowest thou how
useful, how worthy, how ornamental a member of
society, that child might have proved; whom thou art
now about to *strangle* or *abandon* to certain death;—
to what honours, to what happiness, to what useful-
ness, to what degrees of future glory it might have
been advanced!--“Vile and *savage barbarian*, who,
for the slightest provocation, or to gratify the most
diabolical revenge, art just about to plunge the mur-
derous steel into thy neighbour’s bowels; or to level
him to the earth by a leaden death!--Stop thy hand,
till thou hast considered, That thou art now about to
rob helpless children, of a father—a helpless wife, of
her provider—the poor and needy, of a helper—his
friends, of a friend, and the world, perhaps, of a
more useful member of society than thy worthless
self!

(3.) THE chief end and design of this world and
state is, that men should prepare and provide for a bet-
ter, and an eternal world. Human life was given
chiefly for this purpose, and would be worth nothing
on any other supposition. I may even affirm it, with
confidence, that it would be unworthy of the wisdom
and goodness of God to create such a being as man,
and to expose him to the many calamities and afflictions
of this life, *merely* for the small portion of pleasure and
happiness which he enjoys in it.

LIFE, *human life*, is a *time* and *space* of *trial* and *pro-
bation* for eternity. In this view of it, human life is an
invaluable treasure, and every moment of it is of the
utmost importance! For this purpose the Psalmist impor-
tunately prays; “LORD, cut me not off in the midst
“of my days; thy years are throughout all genera-
tions*.” For this purpose we pray against *sudden*

* Psal. cii. 24.

deaths; lest we should be hurried into eternity, and before the judgment seat, with our sins upon us, and in an unprepared state.

BUT, now, the murderer robs us of all our precious time,--- sends us suddenly and unexpectedly before the tribunal of God, without the possibility of a God *have mercy*; and, perhaps, plunges us, impenitent, into an everlasting hell of misery and despair!-- O! *what restitution* can be made in this case! What reparation for this injury! If any guilt can look too big for divine mercy, it must be such guilt as this!

WHAT can our sorrow, what can our tears, what can even our blood do towards atoning such aggravated guilt as this? Can we redeem this soul from hell? Can we again give it a new state of trial and probation; or one hour wherein to work out its own salvation?

(4.) THIS is a crime against *humanity*; a crime against all the soft, tender and sympathetic feelings of the heart! It speaks an insatuated understanding, a hard heart, a seared conscience!-- A man must first kill himself as it were; do violence to all his feelings, as a man; have totally divested himself of his humanity before he could imbrue his hands in the blood of his fellow-creature, his neighbour, his friend, his brother of the human race.

(5.) It is a crime truly *diabolical*. The devil was a murderer from the beginning; and hence he is called *Abaddon* and *Apollyon*, the *destroyer*. *Envy*, *malice* and *revenge*, from which murder springs, as from its proper source, are passions *truly diabolical*; and a man must indeed be a *devil incarnate*, before he can coolly premeditate murder, and take pleasure, or enjoy gratification, in spilling innocent blood. And this is the infamous glory of those, who scruple not to declare,

that *revenge is sweet* ! If there be, indeed, a pleasure in this kind of revenge, it is truly the pleasure of a devil, and perhaps the only species of pleasure of which a devil is capable !

(6.) GREAT and *horrible* as the crime of murder is in itself, yet there are many circumstances which may exceedingly aggravate and increase its guilt ; from the time when, and place where it is committed ; from the persons upon whom, and deliberate manner in which it is perpetrated. Perhaps it was a poor innocent, a helpless infant ! Perhaps it was an aged, indulgent father, or the child of our bowels ! Perhaps it was a brother, or a friend who sticketh closer than a brother, and whom we ought to have protected at the hazard of life ! Perhaps it was done deliberately, in cold blood, after long premeditation, and for some slight provocation, or upon some mere punctilio of honour ! Perhaps it was the father of a family, whose helpless children depended wholly upon his life for their support ! These, and a number of other circumstances, render this crime exceedingly heinous.

2. THE aggravated guilt of murder farther appears from the light in which both the word of God, and the consciences of men, represent it. When *Cain* slew his brother *Abel*—"The LORD said, what hast thou done ? The voice of thy brother's blood cryeth unto me from the ground. And now thou art cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand*.—Your blood of your lives will I require, at the hand of every beast will I require it ; and at the hand of man, at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man†."

* Gen. iv.

† Gen. ix.

It is a crime of a *deep die*, and of a *crimson colour*;---a *land-polluting, land-defiling* sin. "Ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are, for blood it defileth the land, and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it*." "By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood: Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish†." "Ye know, (says, the Apostle) that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him‡." And how earnestly does the Psalmist pray, "Deliver me, O LORD, from blood-guiltiness§."---"Surely, at the command of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, and for the innocent blood which he shed: For, he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the LORD would not pardon||."

THE heinousness of this crime is also manifest from those terrors of conscience which generally follow the commission of it. How dreadful was the case of Cain? "My punishment, (says he) is greater than I am able to bear;---from thy face shall I be hid, and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me**."---How piercing is the lamentation of unhappy Lamech? "Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech, hearken to my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt! If Cain shall be avenged seven fold, surely Lamech,

* Exod. xxi. 12,---15.

† Hof. iv. 2, 3.

‡ 1 John iii. 15.

§ Psal. li.

|| 2 Kings xxiv. 3, 4.

** Gen. iv. 14.

"seventy and seven-fold!" (See how his terrors are multiplied, from a sense of his guilt*!)—the same truth might be illustrated from the history of *Joseph's brethren*—of *David*—of *King Herod*—of *Pontius Pilate*—of *Judas the traitor*, and of many other murderers, in profane history. Indeed, it is very remarkable, that *man-slayers* are haunted with the most frightful terrors, which leave them little ease or peace of mind; and that many of those who have perpetrated the most horrid murders, in the most secret manner, have been driven by these terrors, to *betray their guilt*, to *confess their crimes*, and to die for them, rather than enjoy a life, wholly insupportable!

NOR, my friends, are these terrors *vain things*:—They have their ground in the very constitution of our nature, and in that moral law which God hath written on the human heart. They are *peculiar to men*, to *moral agents*, *accountable creatures*: And *that God*, who hath implanted them in the human breast, must be a *liar* and a *deceiver*, (with all reverence be it spoken) if these terrors have not an object in nature, and if they are not the forerunners of future punishment! I should now, in the

II. PLACE, shew you that this is a crime justly punishable by death. But indeed, this is a truth almost too obvious to need either *proof* or *illustration*. Surely, if there is any *capital crime* committed among men, *murder* is that crime. The divine law is express in the matter, and seems to insist on the death of the murderer, at the risk of the community, without leaving any room or plea for mercy. "At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man: Who-so sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be

U u

* Gen. iv. 24.

“shed†.” “He that smiteth a man that he die, he shall surely be put to death.—He shall have no refuge.—Thou shalt even take him from mine altar, that he may die‡. Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer; but he shall be surely put to death. Ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are; it cannot be cleansed of the blood shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it§.” The most barbarous nations, even from the light of nature and reason, have always deemed murder worthy of death—as appears from the history of *Jonah* and the *mariners*—and the *Barbarians* of the island *Melita*, who, when they saw a viper fasten on the hand of *Paul*, said, “No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live||.”

THE same passions and barbarity of temper which have led a man to commit *one murder*, may lead him to commit many;—and such are the dreadful consequences of this crime, that it would be dangerous to spare the life of such a criminal, unless we could be assured of his true conversion, which is a matter not easily ascertained: And therefore no security could be given to society, for his future good behaviour.

It is very remarkable, that above all crimes, *murder* seldom goes unpunished even in this life; Providence often strangely so ordering it that those who have committed this crime in the most *secret manner*, have frequently been discovered by the most surprising means, and brought to condign punishment, often many years after the commission of the fact.

SINCE, therefore, *my brethren*, murder is such an atrocious crime, and condemned by the laws of God and

† Gen. ix. 6.

‡ Exod. xxi. Lev. xxiv.

§ Deut. xix. Exod. xxi.

|| Acts xxviii. 4.

man to so shameful and ignominious a punishment; how careful ought we to be, both as *men* and *Christians*, to mortify such *passions* and *tempers*, and shun such *practices* as tempt and lead to it?—To *expose these*, therefore, in a practical manner, and to caution my hearers against them, is the

III. AND last head of discourse proposed.

I. THEN let us set a strict watch over our hearts, in their very inmost thoughts, desires and movements. Out of the heart, says the wise man, are the issues of life. This is the cockatrice's nest, where all the viperous brood of malignant passions are hatched and brought forth. How often has an unfriendly thought, harbored there, boiled up into malice and broke out into murder?—We are apt to think little of anger, and freely to indulge it: With *Jonah*, we think we do well to be angry; We let the sun go down on our wrath—and keep it from day to day, from week to week, and from month to month, fermenting in our bosoms: We call to mind every circumstance that may aggravate our wrath, and brood upon it in our minds night and day, till it rankles and festers into malice—never considering, that anger and malice are the very seeds of murder—nay, that they are murder itself in God's account, and by the determination of the gospel of CHRIST!—What says CHRIST? “Ye have heard, that it hath been said by them of old time, “Thou shalt not kill: But I say unto you, whosoever “is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in “danger of the judgment: And whosoever shall say “unto his brother, *Raca* shall be in danger of the council: But whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in “danger of hell-fire*.” We are commanded to be

* Matth. v. 21, 22.

angry and not sin; and cautioned not to let the sun go down upon our wrath!—But alas! How difficult a duty is this? And yet how important! How quickly does anger degenerate into malice and envy? And how often do these malignant passions break out into rage, and end in *bloodshed* and *murder* itself! of what importance is it, therefore, that we should keep the heart with all diligence, and crush and stifle those seeds of *murder* there, before they become ungovernable and *bring forth fruit unto death*?—How dangerous is an *irascible temper*? And therefore the wise man counsels, “Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul;” “From within, (says our Saviour) out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses;—these are the things which defile a man†.” This is the source of all corruption, the fountain and origin of all the outward evils of the life, which sendeth forth iniquity, as a fountain sendeth forth its waters. Of what importance is it, therefore, to *watch over the heart*, and to have *this fountain of the life cleansed and purified* by grace! Were men at any pains with their *hearts*—would they look into these *chambers of imagery*, and put a stop to the workings of iniquity there;—would they give no quarter, no indulgence, to the sensual and malignant passions, but instantly *crush and exterminate* them as they rise in the imagination, and check the thought of wickedness, which is sin; and, while they attempt this, would they *pray for God’s help*, and that he would create in them a clean heart, and renew a right frame of spirit, within them, they would have few out-breakings of sin in their lives.---But just the reverse of this is the

* Prov. xxii. 24.

† Matth. xv. 18, 19, 29.

case of sinners; they not only totally neglect the government of the heart, but freely invite evil thoughts into it, and fondly cherish them there; so that their hearts are like *the sluggard's garden*, a nursery of every poisonous and noxious weed, and over-run with all the *sensual* and *malignant* passions. "Whosoever hateth his brother, (says St. *John*) is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him*."

2. *AVARICE*, or *covetousness*, is often the cause of murder. "The love of money, hath, in this respect, been the root of much evil—which, while many have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows†." Many of the *wholesale murders* committed under the pretext of war—and most of the *private murders* committed in robberies, have sprung from this source.

AHAB committed this kind of murder on *Naboth*, for his vineyard. A king covets a neighbouring state, and sends his soldiers to murder the inhabitants, the rightful proprietors, that he may possess it: And yet this shall be sanctified by the name of a *lawful war*,—and the *murderers* who fall in the attempt, shall be said to die in the bed of honour; and the *chief murderer*, who set them on, shall be called a *mighty hero*! And his name shall shine in the annals of history! But that God who sitteth on the throne of the universe, and is the avenger of innocent blood, seeth his guilt and shall repay it.—If the poor wretch, who, under a sense of provocation, taketh away the life of his neighbour, shall be deemed a murderer.—What shall we think of *Cæsar* and *Alexander*, and many other doughty *heroes* since their time, who have shed the blood of many

* 1 John iii. 11.

† Tim. vi. 7,—10.

millions of innocent men, merely through *avarice*, or in the wantonness of their *pride* and *ambition*, to acquire the fame of *mighty conquerors*?—What shall we think also of those, who, under a pretence of religion, have shed tens of Christian blood, by *inquisitions*, *racks*, *fagots*, and every cruel invention of persecution, both heathen and antichristian?—Is it easy to find a name for these *wholesale murderers*? But the souls of them who were slain, are crying from under the altar, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” And verily God will hear their cry; for vengeance belongeth unto him, and he will repay it! Let us therefore beware of covetousness, ambition and superstition, which so often lead to blood-guiltiness!

3. DRUNKENNESS often *leads to, and ends in* the sin of murder. What says the Wise Man? “Who hath wo? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babblings? Who hath wounds without cause? They that tarry long at the wine; for at last it biteth like a *serpent* and stingeth like an *adder*.” “While they are drunken as drunkards, (says *Nabam*) they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry.”—“Wine is a mocker, (says *Solomon*) strong drink is a raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby, is not wise.” How many unnatural quarrels; wounds without cause, and even murders, have been the consequences of intoxication? And, indeed, what else can we expect, when the understandings of men are extinguished, their passions enflamed, and their reason dethroned? In such a situation as this, to what lengths of excess may not men go? Or what is to restrain them from committing the most atrocious crimes?—The

* Rev. vi. 9.

† Prov. xxiii. 29,—32.

light of reason is put out; the judgment is all darkness and confusion; and the passions, like a boisterous sea, are all in a rage and ferment! They have no guide; no guard; no director! Their words and actions are all at random; and are more likely to have a bad than a good direction.

INDEED, the generality of private murders, are owing more or less to this cause. Ought not this, therefore, to be better than a thousand arguments for sobriety, and against drunkenness? Can we possibly be over cautious against an excess, which unmans us, which deprives us of the guidance of reason, proves a stimulus to all the passions, and renders us the dupe of every temptation, and liable to commit the greatest and most destructive crimes?—How many thousands are there this day in the world, who have suddenly committed such crimes in their liquor, in a drunken, unguarded moment, as have ruined themselves and their families, and as they never would probably have thought of in sobriety?

We have reason to thank God, indeed, that this vice is not very common amongst us. But surely we cannot guard too much against it.

4. AND last source of murder which I shall mention, is the false notions of honour and shame, which prevail in the world; and it is the devil's interest to maintain them and keep them up in the minds of men, as they contribute so largely to the peopling of his kingdom.

THE fear of shame has drove many unhappy mothers, to commit the most unnatural and barbarous of all murders, upon the fruit of their own bodies—their smiling, helpless infants?—A dread of the imputation of cowardice, from the meanest and vilest part of the human species, has driven many a man to commit murder upon his neighbour, or to expose himself to the same fate, against every dictate of reason, humanity, charity, and even self-preservation.

How many men deem themselves as much in *honour* and duty bound, to take away a man's life, who, in passion, would give them *the lie*, (when, perhaps, it was only giving them their due!)—as to perform any duty of justice, charity or mercy! And what is very remarkable, *these men of honour*, these *heroes of the point*, are often persons of the most *infamous principles*, and of the most *insolent* and *provoking* behaviour; so that those who converse with them, are under the sad dilemma, either of treating them with a respect which they by no means deserve; or, of being run through the body, for telling them a *naked*, and oftentimes a *seasonable* truth!

AND yet the person who, from Christian principles, or from the principle of self-preservation, would decline this way of determining a point of honour, must lose the esteem of the world, and be posted and stigmatized as a *coward*!

How many murders have had their rise from a word misunderstood, from an affront never designed, or from other punctilios so trifling, as not to deserve the smallest degree of resentment?

To conclude. Would we be removed at the greatest possible distance from the commission of this heinous and atrocious crime,

(1.) LET us labour to obtain a *sound conversion*! Let us pray that God would give us a *new heart* and a *right frame of spirit*; that he would root out of our heart every bitter root of *malice*, *envy* and *revenge*, and that he would implant, in their stead, the principles of *humanity*, *mercy*, *meekness*, *patience* and *Christian charity*; that we may *do justly*, *love mercy* and *walk humbly* with our God!

(2.) LET us keep a strict watch and guard over our *passions* and *appetites*; those lusts which war against the soul, and hurry it on to every species of excess.

AND while we watch, let us pray that we enter not into temptation; that God would, by his grace, keep us from falling; and powerfully assist and uphold us in every time of need. And,

LASTLY; let us shun evil company, which is often the occasion of these sins. "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

THE mischiefs which have arisen from evil company, and the snares which men have been brought into by it are innumerable: "Blessed is the man, that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, (says David*.) He that walketh with the wise, shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. My son, (says Solomon) if sinners entice thee, consent thou not: walk not thou in the way with them: Refrain thy foot from their path: For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood. Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men: Avoid it, pass not by it; turn from it and pass away: For they sleep not unless they have done mischief."

MAY GOD sanctify these instructions of his word to us, and make them operative on our hearts, and fruitful in our lives, through the power and Spirit of CHRIST. Amen.

• Psal. i.

THE END



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